

Harry Potter and the Gift of the Magi By G

Chapter 1 – St. Mungo's

The halls of St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries were like any other hospital found throughout the world, the walls were of a neutral grey hue, the furniture was hard and uncomfortable, and the air smelled of disinfectant. There seemed to be nothing special about this hospital, except, this was a hospital for witches and wizards.

Most of the rooms were of typical hospital fashion, containing camp style beds neatly in rows of six, two chairs for every bed and were not easily distinguishable from one another, but as you continued to traverse the third story halls of this seemingly normal medical facility, the rooms became more elaborate. None more so than the very last room in the west wing of the third floor. It had been decorated with soft, overstuffed chairs and sofas, warm inviting wall colors of red and gold, and a large stone fireplace that was evidently well maintained. The sign on the front of the door read "Minister of Magic".

The room was filled with a large number of people with varying in age from 3 years, to an almost unrecognizable age. They were gathered around an extremely ancient looking man lying on a king sized hospital bed. He had long white hair and an even longer white beard, his skin was tanned and leathery and his eyes were a deep bottle green. It was obvious that the patient was nearing the end of his life, and he was being surrounded by friends and loved ones. All had sorrowful looks upon their faces and everyone was speaking in hushed tones.

The old man opened his eyes, to see the large number of people gathered around his bed. A smile seemed to be forming at the corner of his mouth, and those green eyes were sparkling. "Well, well. It seems the years must be catching up to me." He said in a rough, yet jovial tone.

"Granddad," exclaimed a woman obviously in her sixties or seventies. She wore bottle green robes, and a worn witch's hat. Her hair was

red, and her eyes as green as the old man himself. "Don't talk like that. You're not that old." She continued, trying to sound hopeful.

The old man looked at her from behind half-moon spectacles that magically appeared on his face. "Lily, my sweet, my death should not be mourned, it should be celebrated. I've lived a long and fruitful life, now I just want to rest." He said with a smile.

His granddaughter stared at him through teary eyes. Her look told the old man everything he needed to know, he would be dead soon. "Why do you cry my dear, we all knew this day would come. Death is not an end, it's the next big adventure, as Albus would say. I want everyone to celebrate with me." The old man told his granddaughter, hoping to lift her spirits.

The woman wiped the tears from her eyes, tried desperately to compose herself, and smiled at her grandfather. "I'm sorry granddad; I'm just going to miss you terribly." She said walking over to a nearby relative.

"Look who came." She said, pulling over a man in his fifties, clad in blacker than black robes, and eyes that matched the other two. "It's Harry." She finished, pulling the man closer to the bed. The man sat down, and took the elder man's hand.

"It's good to see you sir." The younger man said, lightly stroking the old man's hand. The old man smiled at the younger man. It was a smile of remorse, there was tension between the two men, and all those gathered around could sense it.

"Harry, it's been too long, I've missed you." The elder man said, now sitting up for the first time.

"And I've missed you too, great-granddad." The younger man replied, trying to keep his voice even and the tension to a minimum.

"Harry, there's something I need to tell you," the elder man began, "I'm proud of you. I know I've never said it, but it's true. I was just not happy when you became an Auror, like me. I wanted so much more for you. You were the smartest of all the Potters, and I thought you'd be like your aunt Lily here, a healer." The old man explained.

Harry smiled at his great-grandfather, evidently longing to hear the words. "I love you, great-granddad. I was never really mad at you; I just wanted to be like you, to follow in the Potter tradition of battling evil." Harry said with a smile and tears in his eyes.

The elder just stared at his great-grandson. He wanted to tell the younger man all he had been feeling these past 30 years, but the words would not come. Instead, they embraced. The embrace lasted ten minutes before Lily broke them apart.

"All right, you two that's enough, let's give the old man some air." She said jokingly, as she pulled the two apart.

"Now, where is that blasted Dobby, he's never around when you need..." The old man stopped in mid statement, when a young man of about 40 entered the room. He was not wearing robes like the rest in the room, but instead wore a black overcoat, pants, shirt and shoes. He had equally tanned skin, brown hair and brown eyes. The young man had a hard look upon his face, but his eyes seemed to contradict his hard expression. The entire group turned to look at the new arrival.

"Leave us." The old man said with a bark, never taking his eyes off the new arrival. Without even a whimper of argument, the entire group walked passed the new arrival, and out onto the hospital hallway.

The young man waited until the door closed behind him before his features softened, and a huge smile spread across his face. He spoke as he approached the bed. "Well if it isn't the famous Harry Potter, 'the boy who lived', 'the chosen one'. The man who defeated Voldemort, Montague and Gresham, three of the most feared wizards of their day." He began with a hint of sarcasm as he sat on the elder man's bed. It was obvious that the man was not a native of the area, as his accent was undeniably American.

"Well if it isn't Michael, my old friend." Harry responded in similar sarcasm.

The two men stared at each other. "I've missed you these last fifty years." Michael said to Harry, taking his hand in a friendly gesture.

“And I you, old friend, it has been entirely too long.” Harry responded with his green eyes sparkling as he spoke to the younger man.

They exchange joyful looks for a few moments, when the young man’s features began to harden again. “Why have you summoned me to this place, you know how I detest hospitals and despise death.” There was a hint of anger in his voice.

“Don’t be angry with me Michael, I needed to see you before I died. There is a favor I’d like to ask you.” There was a pleading tone to Harry’s voice.

Michael softened again. He ran his hand over the old man’s forehead, revealing a lightning shaped scar. “It still amazes me every time I look at that scar. It has distinguished and defined you ever since you were a year old.” A smile spread across his face again like a happy memory had jumped to mind. “A century ago I told you that if there was ever anything I could do for you that were in my power to grant, I would. To that end Harry, make your request.”

Harry looked at his old friend, and a somber look took over this ancient face. “I want you to help Hermione and Ron. I want you to save them. I need you to save them!” Now Harry’s tone was desperate.

Michael just looked at his old friend. Tears were forming in his eyes. “Harry, Hermione died a hundred and fifty three years ago, Ron died a hundred and two years ago, they are not around to save.” His tone was remorseful. The thought of his old and dear friend losing his mind seemed almost unbearable.

Harry straightened himself. “You stupid git, I know they’re dead, I’m not senile.” Harry spat at his old friend.

Michael got a confused look on his face. “Then I don’t understand.” He told Harry honestly.

Harry’s could not look at his friend. “I remember what you told me eighty years ago, you said that you, on occasions, have traveled through time to observe past events. I want you to go back to my sixth year at Hogwarts, and teach me so I can keep Hermione safe.

Then she won't die, and Ron won't go crazy." Harry began to cough heavily, and sank back into bed.

Michael was taken aback. "Harry, you can't be serious, I told you, I cannot change past events, I can only observe. If I interfere with even the smallest of events, I could erratically alter this timeline. Besides, if I interfere with Hermione's death, then you may not kill Riddle, ending his reign of terror." Michael said with his own pleading tone.

"I don't care!" Harry spat. "I want Hermione safe, I want her to live to be godmother to my children, I want Ron to be godfather to my children, and I want them alive!" Harry was openly crying now.

Michael couldn't bear to see his old friend in such pain. "Harry, have you really thought out the ramifications of your request. If I do anything to keep Hermione safe, then Ron won't go insane, you won't visit him in the hospital, you won't meet your wife, have children, grandchildren, great-grand children, you'll never become headmaster of Hogwarts. All will be different, and worst of all, the Harry Potter I knew, and came to love as a brother, will never have existed, a new Harry Potter will have emerged." Michael explained, still with his pleading voice.

Harry lowered his eyes. "I know old friend, but you can go back in time, show me the alternate timelines that you did a hundred years ago. That information gave me strength, knowledge, and wisdom. I know my past self could handle it, he has to..." Harry broke off, obviously recalling a painful memory.

Harry had a flash of past events...

He was in his sixth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. It was the month of June, Voldemort was at the height of his terror, and Harry, Ron and Hermione were having a relatively uneventful year. Voldemort and his Death Eaters had limited their activities to areas outside of Hogwarts and Hogsmeade. The three students were preparing to take their end of year exams; they were studying by the lake on the side of the Forbidden Forest. The Potions exam was easily the hardest of the year, and was approaching steadily.

It was a lovely Saturday afternoon in mid June; the air was warm and fragrant, the grass green and cool and the trees were buzzing with life. The three were laughing at the way Draco Malfoy had been embarrassed by Professor Flitwick in the dueling club the day before. "I can't believe Flitwick did that to Malfoy." Ron began. "He just picked him up and tossed him across the room."

Harry, trying to hold back a hearty laugh, turned to Ron. "Yeah well, the stupid prat shouldn't have called him that." They continued laughing for several minutes before they heard stirring behind them in the forbidden forest.

Turning around to see if anyone was behind them, Hermione said, "I don't know, but I don't like this, that forest is forbidden for a reason." The three stood facing the forest.

Harry turned to his two friends. "You guys go over to the right, I'll go left. Don't actually go in the forest, stay at its edge." The two did as they were told. Harry had turned towards Hagrid's hut to see if he was around, when suddenly Harry heard "STUPIFY", he turned back to his two friends and saw Ron laying on the ground, and Hermione being held by a tall man in a black cloak with the hood pulled down over his head.

The man began to speak in a familiar drawl. "Mr. Potter, we meet again." The hooded man said in a menacing tone.

"Malfoy, let her go!" Harry spat at him, holding his wand at the ready.

"On the contrary Mr. Potter, I not only plan on NOT letting her go, I plan on taking her with me." Malfoy said.

Harry's eyes were full of rage. He began to try to speak, but the cloaked man interrupted him. "My master needs to talk to you Potter; he is giving you an incentive to visit him." Malfoy's voice was calm and soft. "There is a port key on the floor next to your friend here, just touch it and you can be with your mudblood friend here almost instantly." Malfoy said.

"Harry, don't!" Hermione yelled as she disappeared with Malfoy.

Without thinking, Harry ran over to Ron, and looked around the floor for the port key. After only a moment of looking, Harry noticed a book on the floor, the moment he touched the book, he felt that all too familiar tug at the back of his navel, and vanished in an instant.

Harry hit the floor hard, his glasses askew, and his brain swimming. When he managed to straighten his glasses and get to his feet, he saw a most unwelcome sight, Voldemort was standing next to Lucius Malfoy, Malfoy was holding Hermione while keeping his wand pressed up against her head.

“Harry, how nice to see you again.” Voldemort said in his usual hissing voice. “I’m so glad you could see me on such short notice.” His words carried a hint of sarcasm as he spoke.

Harry just glared at him, he felt the anger rise to an uncontrollable level in the pit of his stomach. “Let her go.” Harry spat at Voldemort. “This is between you and me.”

Voldemort laughed at Harry’s words. “Of course Harry, anything you want. I just needed an incentive to get you here quickly.” Voldemort said in an amused tone.

Harry was looking around at his surroundings. It somehow felt familiar, almost like had been there before. Voldemort waved a long finger at Malfoy, who quickly released Hermione from his clutches. Hermione ran over to Harry, who hadn’t moved since his arrival.

Harry turned to Hermione. “When I cast my spell, you run as fast as you can to that rock over on the right.” Harry motioned to a large rock sticking out of the ground about 10 meters from their location.

Harry turned back to Voldemort. He knew he needed to do something, but what? He knew he was the captain of the dueling club, but with all his skill he was no match for Voldemort. Thinking quickly, he did the only thing he could think of, antagonize him, make him as angry as possible, hopefully that would be enough to force him to make a mistake.

“OK Tom, this is between you and me. We have to duel this out, one cannot live while the other survives, remember?” Harry asked in his own attempt at a menacing tone.

Voldemort's red eyes grew very wide. “How dare you use that muggle name? I am LORD VOLDEMORT, the most powerful sorcerer in the world!” Voldemort's voice carried throughout the immediate area.

Harry laughed. “The most powerful sorcerer in the world, you couldn't even defeat a one year old baby. Even Malfoy here is more powerful than you.” Harry said in a calm and even voice.

“Please lord...” Malfoy began. “Let me kill him for you, he is not even worthy of your time. He's just a child.” Malfoy pleaded.

Voldemort turned to his servant. “Very well Lucius, you may have him. But I caution you, he'd better be dead.” The dark lord said.

Malfoy raised his wand, but Harry, being younger and faster, raised his wand first, and screamed. “AVADA KEDAVRA!” Harry had cast the killing curse at Malfoy.

A bright green beam of light shot out of Harry's wand right into Malfoy's chest, Hermione did not wait for Malfoy to fall, she turned immediately and ran for the rock where Harry had instructed her to go.

As Malfoy fell dead onto the floor, Voldemort was turning to see if the curse had hit his servant or not. Harry wasted no time. He knew he could not kill Voldemort with the killing curse, Voldemort was too strong, and so he did the only thing he could. “CRUCIO!”

Voldemort dropped immediately to his knees. The scream coming out of him was deafening. Harry held his wand on Voldemort while he used his shirt to pick up the port key. Harry knew if he touched it with his hand, he would instantly be transported back to Hogwarts.

While keeping the wand steady, he slowly walked over to the rock where Hermione was hiding. She screamed when she saw Harry, and then quickly contained herself.

“Harry, you're alive!” She said, still horrified.

Harry had no time for small talk. "Quick Hermione, touch my arm and the port key. Let's get out..." Harry never had a chance to finish his sentence.

STUPIFY was the last thing Harry heard as he fell down to the floor. A silver handed wizard was emerging out from his hiding spot, and hit Harry with the spell. Hermione grabbed Harry's hand, and while reaching for the book heard, AVADA KEDARVA and landed on the port key.

Harry opened his eyes back at the edge of the lake at Hogwarts. It took a moment for Harry to regain his senses. He looked to his left and saw Ron lying unconscious on the ground. But when he looked to his right, he saw Hermione, dead. "NOOOOOOOOOO!"

Harry found himself immediately back to the present.

Michael seemed to be pondering his idea. "If I go back, and if I help you, you do realize you're signing my death sentence. I could never come back, and I could never stay there." Michael said in a somber voice.

Harry again lowered his eyes. "Yes Michael, the thought did occur to me. You have been my best friend for over a hundred years, and I'm asking you to all but kill yourself to save my friends, to save me. I know what I'm doing is wrong, but what choice do I have. I may have lived a long life, my family may be large and loving, but there is this huge hole in my heart where Ron and Hermione should have been. I NEED you to do this for me! I can't die knowing there is something that I, that you, can do to help. Help me Michael, help me." Harry pleaded again.

Michael sat there staring into the deep green eyes of his old friend. A smile started to develop on his face, as if realizing something for the first time. "Ok Harry, I'll do what you ask. I'll go back to your sixth year, and I'll show you the timelines, and hopefully everything will work itself out." Michael said, standing to go.

"Good bye old friend, I shall never see you again." Michael turned and left the hospital room before Harry could even give his thanks. Michael walked purposefully through the corridors of St. Mungo's

straight past the crowd that had been in Harry's room towards the exit, and vanished.

Michael began to pack his essentials. Many books had been written on the subject of the Magi, but almost all were inaccurate, and written as fairy tales. He knew his order would be in an uproar, but he also had no choice, he and Harry were friends. He finished packing his trunk, took a deep breath, and waved his right hand at the air in front of him. Immediately the view in front of him began to swirl. It was almost like watching an inverted waterspout from above. He picked up his trunk, and walked straight into the disturbance.

He emerged just inside the forbidden forest next to Hogwarts. He took another deep breath, but this time to take in the fragrance, and raised his right hand again, but this time a red eagle shot out of his hand and proceeded west. A smile seemed to creep onto his mouth as he turned to face the castle, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He began the short walk to the front of the castle.

He knocked on the front door of the castle and waited, he knew someone would answer, and someone did. "What do you want?" An old man answered with an annoyed tone.

"Yes, I'd like to speak to the headmaster please." Michael's remained pleasant despite the other man's annoyance.

"Wait here." He spat, motioning to the entrance hall of the castle.

Michael did not have to wait long. Moments later a tall elderly man, with long white hair and beard, and half moon spectacles walked down the stairs, it was Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster.

Dumbledore surveyed Michael for only just a moment, before his eyes started to sparkle, and gave him a huge smile. "Michael my old friend, how wonderful to see you again." Dumbledore said at last.

Michael smiled back at the elder gentleman, and embraced him as a brother. "Albus, it has been entirely too long." Michael held the embrace for a few moments before he let go and began to speak. "Albus, something urgent has come up, may I need to speak with you?" Michael asked hurriedly.

Albus just smiled. "You have an American accent now." Dumbledore said remaining calm despite the other's impatience.

Michael smiled. "Yeah well, so many years in a particular country will do that to you." Michael responded, now calming down.

Albus smiled again, and motioned for Michael to follow. "How about we talk in my office?" Dumbledore said.

Michael just nodded, and followed the headmaster to his office. They walked up to the hallway leading to the gargoyles that guarded the stairway leading to the Headmaster's office. Dumbledore gave the password, and the gargoyles moved to reveal the rising circular, stone staircase. Dumbledore led Michael into the office.

Dumbledore's office was very inviting; the paintings of the former headmasters were sleeping in their frames. Dumbledore sat behind his desk, and motioned to a chair directly across from him. "Sit, old friend." He said, and Michael obliged.

Dumbledore opened the conversation. "Why haven't you come to see me in all these years? And come to that, why are you here now?" He asked pleasantly.

Michael did not know where to begin, so he decided to tell the headmaster everything. "Albus, I'm here at the request of a mutual friend. This friend needs me to show certain things to one of your students." Michael explained vaguely.

Dumbledore just continued to gaze at his old friend without speaking.

"The student has to be able to use this information to take the lives of some and save the lives of others." Michael said.

Dumbledore just smiled at his old friend. "Harry Potter I presume." He said knowingly.

Now it was Michael's turn to smile. "Don't miss a trick, do you Albus?" Michael said with a laugh.

“What do you need to show Harry?” Dumbledore asked, with a worried tone.

“The same type of thing I showed you all those years ago.” Michael answered cryptically.

Dumbledore wore a worried expression but continued to survey his old friend, trying to gauge what he was doing. “Who asked you to come here?” Dumbledore asked instead.

Michael squirmed slightly, obviously not wanting to answer. “Harry did.” Michael said without looking at Dumbledore.

“How many years in the future are you from?” Dumbledore asked with a sly, knowing grin.

Michael returned the smile. “Albus always knew too much for his own good.” Michael thought to himself.

“One hundred and fifty four years.” Michael answered finally. Dumbledore just nodded.

“Can you tell me what you will be showing Harry?” Dumbledore asked with even greater concern in his voice.

“I’m sorry Albus; I cannot alter present events any more than I have to. Suffice it to say, Harry will be in better shape to face Riddle and his Death Eaters.” Michael begrudgingly answered.

“The students have gone home on summer holiday. You’ll have to go see Harry at his aunt and uncle’s house.” Dumbledore stated. It was obvious he was not thrilled with the idea of what Michael had in mind.

“I know that Albus. I timed my arrival perfectly, if I do say so myself. Today, I presume, is the first day of summer holiday, so when I go see Harry tomorrow, we’ll have almost the entire summer together. In case he has questions, which I’m sure he will.” Michael explained.

“As did I.” Dumbledore interrupted.

“As did you, now, the reason why I’m here, I need you to owl him an introduction so he won’t be concerned when I approach him tomorrow.” Michael seemed certain of Dumbledore’s assistance.

“Very well, Michael. I will do as you ask. But I must voice my concern. Harry is young, if he is allowed too much knowledge in a short amount of time, he may...” Dumbledore paused to look for the right words. “He may be tempted to overindulge in certain situations.” Dumbledore had obviously chosen his words carefully because Michael was nodding.

“Trust me Albus, the first life I’ll show him will give him wisdom and strength of character, the second life I show him, will give him the knowledge and power he will need to defeat Riddle. He will be as wise as he is powerful, I guarantee it.” Michael reassured him.

“Very well, Michael. Go to Harry, by the time you arrive there tomorrow, he’ll be expecting you.” Dumbledore conceded.

With that, Michael had bid Dumbledore fond farewell, and strode out of the office.

Dumbledore quickly wrote on a piece of parchment, addressed it to Harry, and gave it to Fawkes, Dumbledore’s phoenix. The bird vanished with the note in his clutches.

Dumbledore sat in his office considering what had just happened. Harry himself, had sent Michael back in time. Dumbledore knew this was no small feat. “Why?” He thought to himself. “Harry must have defeated Voldemort if he had befriended Michael. Then Why?” He thought again.

Chapter 2 – Privet Drive

Privet Drive was dark and quiet. It was only 6:30 in the evening; the sun was starting to fall behind the matching houses of the calm suburban street. Harry Potter was the lone person in the kitchen of number 4 Privet Drive, he was sitting eating a cheese sandwich, and happy to be eating at all.

“And wash the dishes when you’re done in there boy,” bellowed a voice from the other room.

“Yes uncle Vernon,” was Harry’s simple reply.

Harry couldn’t believe the bad luck he had this past year. His godfather, Sirius was dead, school had been a total wreck, and now he was looking forward to another lousy summer holiday with the Dursley’s. Harry’s only saving grace was the threat Mad Eye Moody had made against Uncle Vernon two days before.

He began washing the dishes when he heard a loud screech. Harry looked up from his task, and smiled. A note lay on the table, next to a single phoenix feather. He quickly turned from the sink, and walked over to the table.

“What was that noise?” Uncle Vernon screamed again.

“Nothing Uncle Vernon,” Harry replied.

Harry looked at the now familiar handwriting on the envelope; he did not need to look to know it was from Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster of his school, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He opened the note hoping it was something important.

Harry,

I hope I find you well. I am writing to inform you that an old friend of mine will be paying you a visit tomorrow. His name is Michael, please trust him, for he means you no harm, and he may be able to help you in ways that Hogwarts can’t. I expect to see you again on September 1st.

Albus Dumbledore

The note seemed shorter than he was accustomed to receiving from the headmaster, and it wasn't written on Hogwarts stationary. Harry had no time to ponder this, as his uncle was bellowing that he needed to finish and go to his room.

Harry finished the dishes as he was commanded, and retired to his bedroom. He was not allowed to do any schoolwork at home, as his aunt and uncle hated everything to do with magic. Harry sat on his bed stroking his pet; the snowy owl named Hedwig. Harry replayed the events from the previous year over and over in his head. How could all this have happened? How could Sirius be dead? The questions had no real answers, and Harry fell off to sleep.

The next day was another lovely summer day. There were no clouds to speak of, and the temperature was very warm even for this time of year. Harry awoke from his dream. It had something to do with snakes eating all his friends. He shook the dream out of his head, quickly dressed, and ran out the door before the Dursley's could assign him his daily task.

He wasn't hungry, but knew he would be before long. He walked to the local park, as was his gait ever since last year. He sat on one of the swings, and again started playing the year's events in his head.

Two hours passed, while he watched the younger children playing, and reliving his previous year. Sirius was dead because of Harry, or at least he thought so. Fred and George left school before they graduated; Harry also reasoned this was because of him. Gryffindor, his school house at Hogwarts, had lost both the house cup, and quidditch cup, also because of Harry. He just sat, wallowing in self-pity.

He was about to leave, when he noticed a man walking towards him. The man was dressed all in black, and seemed determined to intercept Harry. The man had brown hair and eyes, and wore a short-cropped mustache and beard. He didn't smile as he walked up to Harry, but he seemed pleasant just the same.

Since Harry was expecting a visitor today, he made no attempt to move. The man stopped right in front of Harry. "Hello Harry, my name is Michael; I presume Albus has informed you of my arrival today." The man spoke with an American accent, Harry was almost taken aback by this.

"You're American?" Harry found himself asking. The man chuckled for a moment.

"No Harry, the accent stemmed from living in the states for many years." He said with a chuckle.

"Harry, I'm hear at the request of an old and dear friend of mine, he asked me to come here and show you something." He said vaguely.

"Show me what? Who sent you?" Harry asked, with his curiosity peaked.

"As far as what, I'll explain in a moment. As far as whom, I'll explain eventually. For now, let's take a walk over to those benches." Michael motioned to a small group of benches a few meters away. Harry followed.

Michael appeared to be no-nonsense; his answers were short, and his motions quick. As they walked towards the benches, Harry noticed the man neither looked at him, or his surroundings, he just kept focused on the benches. Harry didn't know why, but it made him nervous.

Michael directed Harry to sit, and sat himself. "Now, please save your questions until I'm done, it will be easier that way." Harry just nodded. "I'll start with a little background. Harry, I don't know how familiar you are with physics, so listen closely." Michael began.

"There are an infinite amount of universes created with every decision made. For example, if you decide to leave your home 5 minutes earlier, you may end up being struck by a bus and killed, inversely, if you decide to leave on time, you may end up missing the bus, and instead it might kill someone else or no one at all. So something as seemingly unimportant as 5 minutes could be the difference between life and death." Harry was starting to look confused.

“OK, I see I’m losing you. Let’s try this, your mother and father decide to keep your godfather as their secret keeper, Riddle doesn’t find your family, and your parents live. How would this affect the here and now?” Michael asked.

Harry stared at Michael for a moment. “I wouldn’t be living with the Dursleys.” Harry finally answered. Michael nodded.

“Correct, but are you sure? Maybe Riddle didn’t get them that night, maybe he got them a year later, but this time, he killed you as well. How would this world be different?” Michael asked, hoping the answer was clear to Harry.

“Voldemort would have become more powerful, many more people would have died, and this world would be hell on earth.” Harry answered gathering confidence as he spoke.

“Excellent. Now, what if it did happen? What if, in another universe, there exists such a world? Harry, can you imagine how many possible universes there are, if you consider how many seemingly unimportant choices we all make?” Michael asked him.

Harry began to understand. “An infinite number of universes,” Harry answered with a smile.

“Excellent. Now, what if I told you I was tuned in to all these universes? What if I could choose to show you information on the pick of the litter?” Michael knew Harry understood.

“Then,” Harry paused. “Then I could learn from mistakes I haven’t even made yet.” Harry answered confidently.

Now it was Michael’s turn to smile. “Excellent!” Michael exclaimed.

“Now pay close attention, here’s where it gets tricky. What if in your mind, you could be shown an excerpt from one of these universes, and what if your mind interpreted these excerpts as memories, how would you be different?” Michael was visibly nervous when he asked Harry, hoping he had explained it correctly.

"I would... I would be able to use the information in my current life?" Harry answered, almost as a question.

"Yes, but you need to go a little deeper. If you learned a spell, or a maneuver, would you be able to do it in this life?" Michael asked, almost giving Harry the answer.

"Of course," Harry exclaimed. "It would be like any other memory I have now." Harry was pleased with himself.

"Good, now for the question of the day. Do you want me to show you two such universes?" Michael asked, unsure if he wanted Harry to accept or decline. Harry sat for a moment, looking into Michael's brown eyes. Harry flashed to Dumbledore's note, he said to trust Michael.

"What will I learn?" Harry finally asked.

"Excellent Harry, excellent, never take what someone gives you on faith, question everything you can. In answer to your question, the first life will teach you wisdom. I'll only show you the last 3 years at Hogwarts since the first four are almost identical to this universe. But the Harry in this life went through triumph and tragedy, and became a better man for it. This wisdom will be the building block for the knowledge and skill you'll learn from the second life I'll show you. Bare in mind, everything you've learned in these two lives will be like you learned them in this life. The spells, the skills, the lessons, you will claim them as your own, now the drawback."

"I knew there would be a catch." Harry moaned.

"The drawback will be..." Michael ignored Harry. "Is that every feeling you had, love, hate, everything, you will also claim as your own. In the first timeline specifically, there was great triumph and great sorrow, you'll have to be sure." Michael paused for only a moment. "What say you? Do you accept?"

Harry thought for a few moments. "How much knowledge are we talking about?" He finally asked.

“More knowledge than you could earn in five lifetimes.” Michael answered simply.

Harry thought for a few more minutes, he considered his dream from the night before, the snake eating all his friends. He considered the past year’s events at Hogwarts, but most of all, he thought of his godfather, Sirius Black. Michael just sat there patiently while Harry pondered all this.

“Will I learn Occlumency?” Harry asked.

Michael thought for a moment, “that and more” he said.

Harry sat there thinking about his options for over thirty minutes, Michael just sat patiently awaiting his response, when all at once Harry looked up at Michael. “I accept.” Harry said.

And with that Michael put his right hand on Harry’s forehead. “Alright Harry, the influx of information will last only a minute, but it will take over an hour before you can completely divide everything into specific events, an additional hour before you’ll be able to understand these as memories. During that time, I recommend you eat healthy.” Michael motioned to a basket that was not there earlier. “Are you ready?” He asked Harry.

“Yes.” Harry responded shortly.

Suddenly Harry felt a rush of visual images, three years of information was cascading into his mind. It was all Harry could do to keep from screaming as it all attacked his mind. Then, just as suddenly, it stopped.

Harry’s mind was swimming with information. Nothing seemed real, like watching a muggle movie on fast-forward. Harry had to keep closing his eyes, hoping that the images would stop, but they continued, arranging and rearranging in his mind. Michael reached into the basket and handed Harry a drink of butterbeer, hoping to coax Harry into eating.

It seemed to be working; Harry started gorging himself with food, as if he hadn’t eaten in months. The hours passed slowly for Harry, he

kept trying to convert the information into distinct events, into distinct memories. When he was finally able to do so, he turned to Michael.

“Whoa. I, I mean Harry, had an incredible three years.” Harry sat for a moment longer. “Jamie’s dead, my mom’s dead. I killed my mom!” He exclaimed, finally formulating the memory.

The various memories were sputtering to life. Harry saw them, or more to the point remembered them with unobstructed clarity, he had done all this.

“Malfoy, we were friends, Snape, he was my stepfather.” Harry said.

He couldn’t believe all that had happened to him in that alternate timeline. He had helped Voldemort change past events, creating an alternate timeline where Harry’s mother had bargained for his life, and lived. Lived that is, until Harry, himself, killed her many years later.

As Harry finished assimilating all the negative memories, it dawned on him, “Am I an animagus?” Harry asked Michael, still trying to get a handle on all the information flooding into his head.

“Yes Harry, you are an animagus.” Michael responded.

“The Weasley’s, they have two other daughters.” Harry said excitedly.

“Well, they had two other daughters in the other timeline; they may not have any in this one.” Michael explained.

“Percy became an Auror?” Harry said, not really believing it himself.

After another hour of discussing his other life’s events, Michael turned to Harry. “Are you ready for your next life?” He asked apprehensively. Harry looked unsure at first, and then a look of determination crept upon his face.

“Yes I am.” He said simply.

Michael touched his head again. Harry felt the now familiar rush of information. This time, Harry withstood the desire to scream, he just

sat there. A moment later it was over, Michael was handing Harry more food, Harry accepted it, and tried to sort out the information.

"Now that's learning." Harry said awestruck. "I'm an animagus in this life too." Harry said, looking up to Michael.

"Actually Harry, you're an animagus in more than seventy percent of the lives where you are a wizard." Michael explained.

"Wow." Harry began. "I can apparate. I can do elemental magic, I can do wandless magic! I'm an auror!" Harry said, elated beyond words.

Night was now falling; they had been in the park the entire day. "I think you should go home and get some sleep, I'll walk you." Michael said, taking Harry by the arm, and leading him home.

They appeared at his door a short time later. "Go on Harry, get some sleep." Michael said, and turned to go.

When Harry opened the door, he heard his uncle Vernon. "WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, BOY?" Harry just looked at his uncle.

"Talking to "Mad Eye" Moody, you remember him Uncle Vernon." Harry said quickly, thinking of the best response to his Uncle's question.

Vernon Dursley was struck dumb; Petunia just put her hand to her mouth, and gave a shriek. Harry walked up the stairs with a huge smile on his face. Walked into his room, changed and went to bed.

Harry was lying on his bed, thinking about the two timelines; his two other lives. Suddenly a thought hit Harry. "I CAN do occlumency, Voldemort can't touch me." Harry smiled as he remembered the second life he was shone. The Harry in that life had mastered an obscure book on mind control. Harry slept better than he ever had.

Harry awoke the next morning, bright and early. His head was still swimming with the memories of these alternate lives. Much of the memories were still haunting him, being friends with Draco Malfoy, killing his mother, being a slytherin, and being sent to Azkaban.

And naturally, none more haunting than the reason he went to Azkaban; killing his own mother. Harry kept trying to put the image out of his head, but he kept seeing his mother flying back and hitting the cave wall.

Even though Harry knew this did not really happen to him, it could have, he could have been tricked by Voldemort and forced to change the timelines, as this other Harry did. "No! I'm not going to let this get to me!" Harry thought to himself. "These memories were given to me to make me stronger, not to haunt me." Harry quickly rose from his bed, and went down to the kitchen.

Upon arrival, he was met with a most welcome site, a note from his aunt and uncle claiming they and Dudley had gone out for the day, and wouldn't be returning until late that evening. "Now I'm happy." Harry thought to himself.

The doorbell rang, and Harry walked over to answer it. "Michael! Good morning." Harry began. "Come in."

Michael walked into the house without saying a word. He took a quick look around, and then turned to Harry. "Everything alright, any questions, concerns, anything?" Michael asked, evidently expecting a barrage of questions.

"Just one, in both timelines someone told me the reason I could do so many things others couldn't was because I believed it was possible. Is that true?" Harry asked curiously.

"Actually Harry, yes, in the second of those timelines Dumbledore told Hermione that the reason you could do all those extraordinary things was because you have no preconceived notions about magic. No one had ever told you things were impossible, so you would find a way. It's just as true here, so long as you believe you can do something, you'll find a way." Michael explained.

"Anything else," Michael asked.

"No. I think I understand why you showed me those lives, and I think I agree with you. It has already taught me a lot." Harry answered looking and sounding more mature than he ever had.

Michael gave a small laugh. "Now that's the Harry I know." Michael said realizing he said too much.

"What do you mean, the Harry you know?" Harry asked with a slight snap to his voice.

"I guess I should tell you." Michael began. "If you remember yesterday, I said I was sent by a friend? Well, I was sent by Harry Potter, a Harry Potter over a hundred years in the future. He asked me to come back here and show you those two lives, he knew this would give you the tools to protect and defend yourself and your friends. I of course did not agree, but I did it for a friend's last request. You were dying." Michael faltered at these words. He and the future Harry had been friends for a long time, and the memory of his friend's deathbed was very painful.

"I sent you?" Harry asked, more to himself than to Michael. Harry had a tough time imagining why he would send someone back in time.

"Yes Harry, you and I were friends for a long time, over a hundred years, but your life was incomplete without your friends Hermione and Ron, so you asked me to come back." Michael answered.

"What happened to them?" Harry asked, now feeling a rush of fear.

"Hermione was killed by Riddle himself, and Ron lost his mind when he found out. Oh, and this happened, or actually, would have happened at the end of this coming school year. But you felt, if you had all this knowledge, you could, 1) protect them, and 2) teach them to protect themselves." Michael answered in a soft tone.

Harry sat at the kitchen table of number 4 Privet Drive contemplating all Michael had said. He had to protect his friends, he had to teach them, and he had to do this before the end of the year. "Then I won't disappoint myself, I'll protect and teach them." Harry said with a conviction he had never known. Michael just smiled and shook his head.

"Now that's the Harry Potter I know." He said simply.

“One more thing, Harry,” Michael began. “I won’t be around to guide you; I want your experiences to be untainted by me. I’ll come by every now and again to check on your progress, but as soon as I leave, you’re on your own.” Michael explained.

Harry said nothing to this, and just nodded his head. He had always felt alone, and he expected no less. Michael left.

Harry spent the remainder of the morning practicing the only magic he could, wandless magic, elemental magic, and advanced apparition. Harry knew his skills in all three were far beyond any living wizard, he had already learned this in one of the other timelines. He knew anti-apparition barriers meant nothing to him; he could apparate anywhere and any time he wanted. His abilities would frighten everybody in the wizarding community, so Harry decided to keep quiet, for now.

Harry grew bored of his practice, he wanted real wizards and magical creatures to practice on, but who, where. The unspeakables in this life, didn’t train him, nor was he friends with them. Then he realized, the order of the phoenix, they could help. The problem was he would have to explain what had happened to him, and he just wasn’t ready for that. He resolved himself to practice in the only place he knew he would not be disturbed; the Forbidden Forest.

Harry apparated to the forest just outside of Hogwarts, he knew none but Hagrid would ever go into the forest for any reason, and Hagrid was away on “Order” business.

“Alright” Harry said to himself, “where do I begin?” He wondered aloud.

Harry conjured up life-sized human targets that he charmed into popping out from behind trees and bushes. He charmed them into firing blanks spells at him as soon as he came into view.

Harry began a barrage of various spells and curses at the targets throughout the forest. Upon destruction, the targets would reform and relocate themselves to another hiding place. He practiced all the spells, charms and curses he had learned from the other two timelines, he even spent a great deal of time on the “Unforgivable Curses.”

Harry had never felt as happy, in this lifetime, as he felt now. With the continued practice, he grew more confident, more skilled, and even more controlled.

After about six grueling hours, Harry banished the targets, conjured up some lunch from the Dursley's refrigerator, and sat himself down to a private picnic. He gave great thought about all the knowledge he had acquired and how to use it to greatest advantage.

Harry spent the greatest amount of time on the mind control book he read in one of the timelines. He considered this the single most important skill next to wandless magic. He considered all the possible uses for the skill, but almost all of them went against his personal beliefs. All except for one...

"The Longbottoms!" Harry exclaimed, realizing he could help his longtime friend's parents. Neville Longbottom was one of his closest friends in Hogwarts, Neville stood by Harry at the Ministry just prior to the end of last term. His parents had been brutally tortured into insanity by a Death Eater who now roamed free; Bellatrix Lestrange.

Harry knew what he had to do, and he would do it immediately.

Harry closed his eyes, and used his newly infused talent to search out Neville. The moment he found him in his mind, he apparated.

Harry appeared in front of a large Victorian home, with two equal-length turrets and large picture windows. The neighborhood was obviously magical, judging by the many children flying only a meter off the ground on their toy broomsticks, and waving their toy wands. Harry smiled to himself, remembering the alternate life when he grew up in Hogsmeade, how he longed for such a memory in this one. He walked up to the door and knocked.

A round face boy, taller than Harry answered the door. "Harry! What are you doing here?" Neville asked excited to see his good friend from Hogwarts.

"I came to talk to you, is there some place we can go?" Harry asked.

“Yeah, Gram is out at the market, we can talk inside.” Neville responded confused. They stepped inside.

The inside of the house was all magical, there was a broom sweeping the floor of its own accord, some eerie song was playing on the wizarding wireless, and a needle was darning a robe on the dining room table. Harry was ushered to a very cozy chair in the large living room. He sat, and waited for Neville to do the same.

“Neville, I’ve recently read a book on…” Harry paused, choosing his words. “On ailments of the mind, I think I might be able to help your parents.” He paused again. “If you want me to,” Harry finished.

Neville just look dumbstruck, he had always admired Harry, and believed he was very powerful, as did most of the wizarding community, but even he doubted Harry of such feats. “Do you think you really could?” Neville asked.

“Yes, but if it works, no one can know I had anything to do with it.” Harry said, hoping Neville understood.

Neville stared at Harry, unsure whether Harry was serious or not. “If you think you could help them, then I would like you to try.” Neville said, hoping beyond hope that Harry was serious.

“OK Neville, we’ll have to do this under the cover of darkness, I’ll come by to get you at midnight, and we’ll go to St. Mungo’s.” Harry said quickly.

“But Gram will catch us, she never sleeps.” Neville added, knowing his grandmother all too well.

Harry smiled. “I don’t think she will. Just be ready in your room at midnight.” Harry said, sounding determined.

“In my room?” Neville asked.

“Just be ready, Neville.” Harry said shortly.

“OK.” Neville said as Harry was getting up to leave.

Neville walked him out the front door. "Harry, how did you get here anyway?" Neville asked him, looking up and down the street.

"Like this." Harry said disappearing. Neville just gawked at the spot Harry had been standing.

Harry was back at the Dursley's, he was in the kitchen when he heard the arrival of his aunt and uncle.

"Boy!" His uncle bellowed.

Rather than answering, Harry casually strolled into the sitting room, right up to his aunt and uncle, and simply said; "sleep". They blinked momentarily, and turned towards the stairs, and went to bed.

"I know, it's wrong," Harry said to the empty room, "but it's so much fun." He added.

Harry checked the clock in his room, the time read 11:58, he knew it was almost time. Harry rose from his bed, and put on his shoes and wizard's robes, and stepped into the center of his room. The moment the clock read 12:00, Harry disappeared to Neville's room.

Neville was pacing back and forth in his room. He was dressed, and ready to go to St. Mungo's. "I hope Harry can help them." Neville thought to himself. He turned to look at his clock for the tenth time in the last three minutes. "Twelve o'clock." He said aloud, when he heard a soft POP noise, and Harry was standing next to him.

"Ready to go," Harry asked him.

"Ready." Neville responded confidently.

"Then we're off." Harry touched Neville's arm, and they vanished from Neville's room.

The Longbottom's room was no different since the last time Harry had been there. Gilderoy Lockhart was sleeping peacefully in his bed at the near side of the room. The Longbottom's were on the far side. Harry and Neville strode quietly over to them. "What exactly are you going to do?" Neville asked timidly.

“I’m going to enter their minds, and bring them back.” Harry answered simply. Neville’s jaw dropped.

“You can do that?” Neville asked reverently.

“I’m not sure, but we’ll soon find out.” Harry responded.

Harry walked up to Mrs. Longbottom first. He placed his right hand on her forehead, and closed his eyes. Harry found himself in a dark, empty space. There was no sound, but the sound of his own heartbeat in his ears. He knew at once, he was in her mind. “Mrs. Longbottom!” Harry called out in her mind. “Can you hear me?” He tried again and then again, but there was no response.

Harry thought for a moment, and then pictured the woman he was just looking at in the hospital room, he remembered her hair, her eyes, the shape of her nose, everything, then called out again, “Mrs. Longbottom, come to me!” He opened his eyes and saw Neville’s mother staring back at him.

“Who are you? What are you doing in my house?” She asked.

Harry look around and found himself in the house he had just vacated, Neville’s house.

“My name is Harry Potter; I’m a friend of your son, Neville.” Harry said reassuringly. “Harry? Harry Potter? That can’t be, both Harry and Neville are babies, they’re only a year old.” She retorted angrily.

“No Mrs. Longbottom, it’s been fifteen years since you’ve seen Neville; he’s my friend at Hogwarts.” He answered. She just stood eying Harry as he spoke those words.

“No! It can’t be! This is a nightmare!” She screamed, ran into the kitchen, and Harry immediately knew this was going to be difficult.

Harry had no idea how much time had elapsed while he was talking to Mrs. Longbottom, but he knew it was probably several hours. He had managed to convince her he was telling the truth, and she was willing to wake from her fifteen-year dream. Harry touched her elbow,

and closed his eyes; he pictured her regaining her conscience, and him returning to his.

When he opened his eyes, he saw Neville staring back at him. "How long has it been?" Harry asked exhausted.

"Only a few seconds," Neville answered confused, Harry immediately sat bolt upright.

"A few seconds," Harry echoed. "How could it have been only a few seconds, I was speaking to your mom for hours." Harry never got a reply to his statement, Mrs. Longbottom began to stir and Neville's attention jump to her.

"Neville, are you here?" She asked, sitting up, and focusing on her son.

"Mum!" Neville yelled as he hugged his mother. "You're alright!" He bellowed.

"My darling boy, oh, how you've grown." She said through teary eyes, returning his hug. They continued to hug for several minutes more, before she turned to Harry, but speaking to Neville. "That's some friend you've got there, Neville. He's told me everything; he's reunited me with you." She said beaming. Harry looked between the two as they were beaming at him.

"I still have one more to do." Harry said motioning to Neville's father.

"Oh, yes, please." Mrs. Longbottom said.

Harry immediately went into his trance. Neville and his mother just watched patiently. They both knew Harry would succeed. After about ten or fifteen seconds, Harry opened his eyes and smiled.

"Another family reunion," he said joyfully. Neville and his mother turned to see Neville's father staring at them with a huge smile.

"My family," Mr. Longbottom said in a hoarse voice.

Harry rose and left the room to give the Longbottoms additional privacy, but he knew deep down inside, the reunion, at least for the moment, would be brief. Harry had to get Neville back home, so the hospital could contact him and his grandmother. Harry gave them about an hour. He had spent the time carefully walking the halls of St. Mungo's.

"Neville," Harry began. "We have to get you home, remember?" Harry asked.

"Home, but I want to stay here!" Neville bellowed.

"Now Neville, I've already discussed this with your parents, there is no viable explanation as to why you're here, unless you implicate me as the one who helped your parents." Neville hung his head.

"Neville," His father began. "As soon as you and Harry are gone, we'll alert the healers, and they'll call your grandmother. It shouldn't be longer than an hour. I promise." He added.

Neville looked between the three. "OK." He relented. "But I'll be back as soon as I can." He added. He and Harry stood, and moved to the center of the room. With a soft POP, they were gone.

Back at Neville's room, the two classmates stared at each other. "Thanks Harry, I'll never forget this." Neville said hugging his friend.

"OK Neville, just promise me, you won't tell a soul." Harry said sounding serious.

"I promise Harry, I promise." Harry turned from his friend, and was gone.

Harry appeared back in his room at Privet Drive, he was mentally exhausted, but satisfied that he had helped his good friend. He quickly changed, and went to bed, secure in the knowledge Voldemort was not going to disturb his dreams.

Chapter 3 – The Duel

Harry spent the next two weeks using wandless magic to do chores around the house by day, and out in the Forbidden Forest practicing elemental magic by night. His skills with wandless magic had improved even more than in the life Michael had shone him, he could now perform all of the spells, charms, hexes and curses he knew without a wand. His abilities with elemental magic were progressing as well, his fire creature, which he kept small for fear of burning down the forest, was more defined and powerful. Harry had even been able to conjure up both a fire creature, and a water creature, and had them fight for his entertainment. It wasn't a bad holiday after all.

Harry continued to receive the Daily Prophet every day. He would read the newspaper from cover to cover, to keep tabs on the goings on of the wizarding world. Voldemort had been constantly attacking since being spotted at the Ministry of Magic, Harry was not sure what this all meant, but he was sure it wasn't good.

He noticed the Prophet would continually refer to Harry with reverence, referring to him constantly as the "Chosen One", the exact opposite of the year before. "Gits, all of them," Harry thought to himself.

Harry awoke on the morning of the fifteenth of July. The sky outside his window was a menacing gray, with spattered clouds of black; it was going to be a hot and rainy day. The post owl, a white snowy owl, like Hedwig, arrived at his window while he was looking out onto Privet Drive. Harry removed the newspaper, and handed the owl its payment. Harry unrolled the Daily Prophet, expecting to see the typical story about how to best defend yourself from dark witches and wizards, but what Harry saw made him sick.

"Remaining Dementors Abandon Azkaban!"

Last night, the remaining Dementors guarding the wizarding prison; Azkaban, fled after negotiations with the Minister of Magic; Cornelius Fudge ended abruptly. The Dementors and the Ministry had been in negotiations for two weeks, since the first sighting of the Dark Lord. Minister Fudge immediately dispatched Aurors to continue to guard the prison, but the damage had already been done. Several well-

known prisoners escaped during the absence of the Dementors. Minister Fudge was unavailable for comment.

“Why am I surprised, Dumbledore said it over a year ago.” Harry thought to himself. “Well, at least some of the prisoners are still there.” Harry assured himself while dressing, and preparing to go down to breakfast.

When Harry walked into the kitchen, he quickly noticed all three Dursley’s staring at him. “What?” Harry asked shortly.

“Another one of those confounded beasts just flew in,” bellowed Uncle Vernon.

Harry turned to the refrigerator to see another owl, hooting happily on top of it. Harry walked up to the bird, took the parchment attached to its leg, and gave it the bacon that was sitting on his Cousin Dudley’s plate. Amazingly, no one said a word.

Harry unrolled the parchment and began to read, while pouring himself some juice.

Harry,

Dumbledore has arranged for a duel between you, and some of the members of the Order. You are to meet us at Hogwarts at noon today. Be sure to bring your wand. Tonks will be arriving at a quarter ‘til to pick you up. Be careful.

Moody

Harry smiled. “Who is that from, boy,” yelled uncle Vernon.

Harry looked up at his uncle. “Mad eye Moody,” Harry said, knowing the reaction his uncle would have.

Uncle Vernon gave what sounded like a grunt, and went back to his newspaper and breakfast. Harry smiled again.

“I won’t be able to mow the lawn.” Harry began. “Moody wants to see me at noon, so I have to go get ready.” Harry looked around; waiting

for an answer, but none came. Harry shrugged, and went back upstairs to his room.

Harry spent the rest of the morning practicing some more before the duel. He wasn't really nervous; he just wanted to be prepared. His other life had taught him a great deal, he knew he could even defeat the entire order, with enough practice, but that was just it, he needed to practice. As soon as his clock read 11:45, Tonks appeared next to him.

"Ready?" She asked.

"Absolutely." He responded.

Harry and Tonks instantly vanished, and appeared in front of the gargoyle that marked the entrance to Dumbledore's office. The gargoyle immediately jumped to one side, revealing the revolving staircase. Tonks just stared speechless. Harry walked up to Dumbledore's door, and knocked.

"Come in, Harry." He heard Dumbledore say.

Harry quickly turned the knob, and entered.

"I don't recall giving you or Tonks the appropriate password." Dumbledore said to Harry.

"I don't understand it either, the gargoyle just moved on it's own." Harry lied, knowing full well why it moved.

"Indeed." Dumbledore replied. "Well, I'm going to have to look into it. But, in the meantime, I decided to give you a little dueling practice. I'm anticipating Michael's training to have been beneficial to you." Dumbledore said, eliciting a response from Harry.

"Oh, yes sir, very beneficial." Harry answered.

"Excellent, then I think we should head down to the Great Hall." Dumbledore said, rising from his chair.

They walked down together, when they arrived at the Great Hall Harry was floored to see it had been transformed. There were no tables, just various objects strewn around the cavernous room that also appeared to have been enlarged for the duel. Harry quickly surveyed the room for useful items to use in the duel. He quickly spotted a fire roaring in the fireplace at the far end of the room, a dining table set for eight people, with water in the glasses, and large objects he could banish across the room at would be assailants.

“So Harry, what do you think?” Dumbledore asked with a smile.

“Perfect.” Harry answered. “Who will I be dueling today?” Harry questioned Dumbledore.

“Ah, that was the difficult thing. I wasn’t entirely sure Professor Snape would be able to control himself, and several of the Aurors were unavailable, so you’ll be dueling Moody, Tonks, Remus, Bill and Charlie.” Dumbledore answered pleasantly. Harry thought for a moment.

“Only five?” Harry asked simply.

Dumbledore could not contain his amusement, “well, let’s just see how you do with the first five.” Dumbledore said laughing.

The five members of the Order arrived as Dumbledore was talking to Harry. The mood was light, it was evident they expected the duel to be very short, and for Harry to lose miserably.

“Attention.” Dumbledore began. “The rules of this duel are simple, the five members of the Order, verses Harry. Only the unforgivable curses are not allowed.” Dumbledore announced.

“Then it shouldn’t take too long.” Harry said jokingly.

“This boy’s too cocky, I will enjoy this.” Moody said with a bark. Harry just smiled.

“Well, if there aren’t any questions?” Dumbledore was asking as Harry raised his hand.

"Yes Harry?" Dumbledore said, looking down at Harry.

"Sir, do you think they should have some form of shield, you know, just in case?" Harry said to Dumbledore, but looking at Moody. Dumbledore laughed.

"I'm quite sure they can take it, Harry." Harry nodded.

"I will be watching." Dumbledore said as he turned towards the door. "Begin!"

Harry quickly came to the decision that he would not show his true skills to the Order, he instead resolved himself to lose in the end.

It happened in an instant; the five members of the Order began a barrage of jinxes, hexes and curses. Harry had to react with a speed he had not yet practiced. Luckily for Harry, there were many places to hide and assess the situation.

Harry moved cautiously from behind a crate that was laying off to the right. He peeked just far enough from the crate to see Moody sneaking around the crate that lay opposite to the one Harry hid behind. Harry slowly held out his wand, and a green beam of light erupted, and Moody lay on the floor stupefied.

"That's one." Harry thought to himself.

Harry felt Charlie coming around from the opposite direction, Charlie didn't stand a chance. Again Harry fired a curse without saying a word, and Charlie lay on the floor, stupefied.

"That's two." He counted.

Harry moved so that he was hidden, not only from his dueling partners, but from Dumbledore. Harry apparated to the other side of the enlarged room, and quickly dispatched Tonks and Bill, but allowed Remus to incapacitate him.

Remus awoke the others.

They all stood confused. "What happened?" Bill asked Moody.

"I'd say the boy has been keeping secrets." Moody responded in a laugh.

"I'm sorry guys, can we try it again?" Harry asked smugly. Harry decided this time he would win.

"Begin!" Dumbledore's voice rang out from nowhere.

Harry stood rooted in place. He had decided to practice the blocking and shielding charms instead. The battle waged on. The Order members tried everything they knew, nothing got through. In the confusion, of the battle, Tonks managed to get behind Harry, and fired the disarming charm. "Expelliarmus," she cried. Harry was thrown forward; his wand flew back towards Tonks. Harry immediately composed himself and dove behind an overturned table. He was left defenseless in the eyes of the Order, he had to either use the blocking charms to deflect the spells towards the others, or show more than he had planned. He decided on the former. Harry jumped out from behind the table trying desperately to deflect Tonk's curses towards Moody and Bill who were at a perfect 45 degrees from Tonks. Harry succeeded on his fifth try.

"Sorry." Tonks yelled out as Moody and Bill hit the floor.

Harry immediately took Remus' spell and deflected it towards Tonks, who hit the far wall. Harry used that moment to grab Bill's wand and finish off Remus and Charlie. The duel was over.

Dumbledore entered applauding Harry's accomplishments. He revived the Order members, and shook Harry's hand. "Excellent work, Harry." Dumbledore said smiling.

"Thanks." Said Harry.

"Very impressive boy," spat Moody.

"Where did you learn all this?" Remus asked him.

"I can't say, but it will certainly help me against Voldemort and his Death Eaters." Harry answered excitedly.

Dumbledore excused Harry, and sent him home with Tonks.

Harry awoke the next morning full of excitement and energy; he easily defeated the Order of the Phoenix, and he did it without letting on all he knew. He dressed quickly, and was preparing to go down to breakfast, when he received an owl, excitedly he took the parchment from the owl, and read it.

“What are you so happy about?” Aunt Petunia spat as Harry walked into the kitchen. Harry just ignored her, grabbed a glass of juice, and ran out the door. He had no idea where he was going, but was just glad to be out.

Harry decided to buy some new robes for the evening. He quickly ducked into the hedges of number 4 Privet Drive, and vanished. He appeared in a broom closet of the Leaky Cauldron, opened the door, and walked into the main room. Tom, the toothless bar tender greeted Harry with a look of utter bewilderment, as Harry passed towards the entrance to Diagon Alley.

After touching the appropriate brick, he used his finger in place of his wand just to see if it would work, and the wall opened to the busy, store-lined street. “I love wandless magic.” Harry thought to himself. After removing a sizable sum from ‘Gringott’s’, he walked down to ‘Madam Milkin’s Robes for All Occasions’, and went inside. The store, in spite of the large crowds in the street, was empty. Madam Milkin herself greeted Harry.

“May I help you dear?” She asked pleasantly, as she walked up to him. “Oh my,” she exclaimed before Harry could speak. “Harry Potter, welcome back!” She screeched.

“Thank you, madam; I’m looking for some new robes.” Harry said needlessly.

She quickly eyed him up and down, and turned towards a rack at the back of the store. “I have some lovely green robes that will go perfect with your eyes.” She said rummaging through the rack.

“No, thank you, I prefer black, just black.” Harry said simply. She looked at him again, and nodded.

After a couple of hours, Harry left the store with four brand new, all black robes. Three in a bag, and the fourth he wore out of the store. He walked up and down Diagon Alley for the remainder of the afternoon. He stopped briefly at the local ice cream shop, bookstore, and the one place he hadn't realized even existed; 'Weasley's Wizard Wheezes'.

Harry was stunned to see the twins' shop, even though he suspected it existed, but between the death of his godfather, and the arrival of Michael, he had completely forgotten. He walked in, half expecting to see the place empty, but was pleasantly surprised to see a mass of people. Harry examined the store from top to bottom; he was amazed at how much work the twins had put into it. While walking around, Harry kept dashing behind various displays to keep from getting noticed, he knew he would have a bit of explaining to do if he was caught.

"Harry!" He heard the familiar voice of Fred Weasley. "What are you doing here, mate?" Fred asked, grabbing Harry in a big bear hug.

"Oh, just picking up some robes." Harry answered quickly.

"George!" Fred yelled to his twin. "It's Harry!" Harry hung his head; the whole store was now looking at him.

"Harry!" George yelled, also taking Harry in a brotherly embrace. "This is all you, mate, all you." He said, motioning to the store, obviously referring to the thousand galleons Harry gave the twins to open their store the year before. "Yeah Harry, all you," Fred agreed.

Harry spent the rest of the day, and evening with the twins. He told them not to mention to anybody he had been there. The twins grudgingly agreed. They had dinner at a seafood restaurant above 'Madam Milkin's' in Diagon Alley. The twins were still very appreciative to Harry for what he had done for them.

"Listen Harry," George began. "We can't thank you enough for what you've done; Fred and I want to repay the money you gave us." He began, handing Harry a bag of money. "You'd be surprised how much we've earned since we opened up a few months ago." George looked serious, Fred just nodded his consent.

"I can't take it guys, really. I gave it this to you, it wasn't a loan." Harry explained.

"Come on Harry." Fred began, attempting to hand Harry the bag. "Take it, for us." Harry just eyed the twins carefully.

"No. If you want to repay me, give it to Ron, he needs it more than I." Harry answered in a finite tone.

Fred looked at George. "I told you, he's a prince." George nodded his agreement. "We'll give it to Ron then, hopefully he won't spend it on chocolate frogs." George said with a laugh, and the other two joined in.

"He might." Harry responded laughing. Fred paid the bill at the restaurant, and the three left.

"Where are you going now," asked Fred.

"Oh, just home," Harry said, turning away from them, and walking back up Diagon Alley.

Harry found a quiet corner, and apparated home. Seeing Fred and George made him homesick for the Weasleys, they were the only family he had ever know, at least in this timeline.

Harry wrote to Dumbledore for permission to spend the remainder of the summer holiday at the Weasley's, Harry hoped Dumbledore would see reason after Harry's spectacular showing at the duel. He tied the note to Hedwig, and she flew out his window immediately.

Harry awoke the next morning to find Hedwig sitting on his chest.

"Back so soon?" He said to her.

Hedwig just held out her talon and hooted.

Harry grabbed the note from her, and immediately recognized Dumbledore's writing. He wasted no time in opening it.

Harry,

In light of your recent showing at the duel, I have decided to allow you to finish the remainder of your holiday at the Weasley's, enjoy. Remus Lupin will be by to pick you up at noon today, please ensure you are completely packed when he arrives.

Albus Dumbledore

Harry could not contain himself, he would be leaving by lunch. Harry packed up his trunk, loaded Hedwig into her cage, and ran downstairs to inform his aunt and uncle.

To his surprise, they were not home. Harry quickly scrawled down a note, levitated his stuff down to the sitting room, and waited for Remus to arrive.

At the stroke of noon, the doorbell rang. Harry jumped off the sofa, and ran to the door. Remus Lupin was staring back at him.

"Hello Harry." He said with a smile.

"Hi Remus, ready to go?" Harry asked impatiently.

"I have to tell your aunt and uncle first." He said.

"They're not home, I left them a note." Harry said, motioning Remus into the house.

Remus followed Harry into the kitchen to see the note, he read it, and satisfied, he turned back to Harry. "Everything packed?" He asked.

"Packed and ready." Harry said smiling.

"No sense waiting for no reason." Remus said, waving his wand over Harry's trunk and Hedwig's cage. He then grabbed Harry's arm, and they disappeared.

Harry stood transfixed on the sight in front of him; the Burrow.

"Your bags are already inside Harry, enjoy your summer." Remus said, as he apparated away. Harry smiled, and walked to the front entrance and rang the bell.

“Harry!” Molly Weasley exclaimed.

“Hi Mrs. Weasley.” Harry said.

“We’ve been waiting for you.” She said, letting him into the house.

“Harry.” Ron’s voice carried across from the kitchen.

Harry followed the voice and found Ron, Ginny and Hermione sitting at the table.

“Hi guys.” He began. “Hermione, how long have you been here?” He asked.

“Just since this morning, I’m spending the remainder of the summer.” She said, giving Harry a hug hello.

They spent the greater part of the holidays happier than any of them could remember. Harry found himself flirting relentlessly with Ginny the entire time. The memory of being married to her left a deep impression in his heart, and he couldn’t keep himself from acting on his feelings.

Ginny on the other hand, found his advances confusing, and dared not to believe they were legitimate.

The morning of the 31st of July rose with a picture perfect blue sky. Even the birds outside Harry and Ron’s window seemed to be celebrating.

”Happy birthday, Harry” Ron and Hermione screamed together.

Mrs. Weasley followed them into the room. “Do you want breakfast, dear?” She said breathlessly.

“Yes, please. Thanks, Mrs. Weasley.” Harry said, happy to be at the Weasleys on his birthday.

“Now Harry, you’re sixteen years old, don’t you think it’s about time you called me Molly?” She asked wanting Harry to be part of her family.

“And call Mr. Weasley, Arthur. Those are our names for heaven sakes.” She beamed at him.

He was left with the feeling that this is how a birthday should be, spending time with the ones you love, and he loved all the Weasley’s. “Except maybe Percy,” thought Harry as he hugged his good friends.

They all went downstairs to find Charlie sitting on the sofa.

“Charlie!” Harry yelled a bit too enthusiastically than he intended.

“Happy birthday,” Charlie bellowed shaking Harry’s hand.

“Thanks.” Harry said simply. “Dad has also wants to wish you a happy birthday.” Charlie said giving Harry knowing look.

“Oh, where is he now, I’ll go see him.” Ron, Ginny and Hermione gave each other confused looks at Harry’s sudden desire to see Mr. Weasley.

“He’s in the back; I’ll take you to him.” Charlie said dragging Harry away from the others.

Harry followed Charlie through the kitchen, and out into the back yard where Mr. Weasley was examining, or possibly tampering with, a muggle lawnmower, Harry was unsure which.

“Dad, Harry’s here!” Charlie called out to his father.

“Harry, happy birthday,” Mr. Weasley said, reaching out to shake Harry’s hand vigorously. “Congratulations on the duel.” He said jovially.

“Thank you, Mr. Weasley.” Harry said, shaking Mr. Weasley’s hand.

“No, no, it’s Arthur, Harry, just Arthur.” Mr. Weasley corrected Harry. “So,” Arthur began again. “I hear you’re quite the dueler, even though Bill and Charlie won’t give me specifics.” Arthur said, giving Charlie a reproachful look.

“I’m not bad, but with a little help, I should get better.” Harry said modestly.

“Well, let’s all get inside before everyone starts wondering what we’re talking about.” Arthur said turning towards the house.

“Um, Arthur,” Harry was still not comfortable calling him by his first name. “Does anybody else know about the duel, I mean besides you, Bill and Charlie?” Harry asked concernedly.

“Oh, no, Dumbledore was very specific about that.” Arthur said seriously. Harry nodded, and followed Arthur into the house.

The moment Harry walked back into the kitchen; Ron pulled him off to the side. “What did dad want?” He asked.

“Oh, just to wish me a happy birthday.” Harry lied. Ron eyed him for only a moment.

“Oh, OK.” He responded unsure whether he believed his best friend or not. They all sat down to breakfast.

“Charlie?” Harry began. “Are you on holiday?” Harry asked knowing Charlie had been around over the last two weeks, even though he hadn’t seen him.

“Um,” Charlie stuttered. “I’ve got a new job.” He said careful not to be specific.

“Really,” Harry questioned. “I thought you loved working with dragons?” He said.

“I do. I just feel the need to be closer to home. You understand, don’t you Harry?” He answered with that same knowing look.

“Oh, Vold...” Everyone gasped. “I mean, Riddle.” Harry corrected himself.

“Exactly,” Charlie exclaimed. Harry got the impression from Charlie’s look, that he should drop the subject, so he did.

Harry spent arguably the best birthday of any of his lives. Being with the Weasley's gave Harry a sense of family he had never had, in any timeline.

Hermione gave Harry a lesson planner; Harry found this a strange gift, until he asked.

"Hermione, why are you giving me a muggle lesson planner," he asked completely confounded.

"For the DA meetings, of course," she answered with an obvious tone.

"But you don't think we'll need them anymore, now that Umbridge is gone?" He questioned back.

"I think we learned so much in those meetings, they SHOULD continue." Hermione said forcefully.

"Do you think Dumbledore will still allow them?" Ron interjected.

"Of course he will!" Mrs. Weasley jumped in. "Albus knows every student needs as much training and practice as possible." Mrs. Weasley said to the group at large.

"Not Harry." Arthur whispered to Charlie. Charlie laughed.

Ron gave Harry an ornately decorated quill, to match the lesson planner.

"Ron! That quill must have cost a fortune!" Hermione exclaimed, knowing full well the prices of such designer quills.

"Harry's worth it." Ron answered back.

"Are sure about this?" Harry whispered to Ron, not wanting to upset him.

"Oh yeah, Fred and George gave me a thousand galleons to buy whatever I want. You've got to see the necklaces I bought Hermione and Ginny." He whispered back.

Harry for one brisk moment, actually thought Ron to be a romantic, but it didn't last long. "Don't worry Hermione; your birthday present is much more expensive." He told her concededly.

"Boys," Hermione said to Ginny exasperatedly.

Ginny gave Harry a more personal gift. She had made him a wand holster, decorated with what Harry thought looked like a basilisk.

"Ginny! It's perfect!" Harry exclaimed giving her a not-so-brotherly hug. She smiled back at him.

"I thought you'd appreciate the decoration." She said with a sly smile.

"Yeah, I do. It's a basilisk." Harry said obviously right by his assumption. Hermione and Ron exchanged looks of understanding. They both had their suspicions.

The rest of the day was filled with great food, great friends, and great games. Fred, George, and Bill arrived late that evening, and the party got into full swing. There were Fred and George's practical jokes, and joke shop stories to keep them all entertained. Harry couldn't remember anything more enjoyable.

As the evening was winding down, Harry was finding the desire to ask a question overwhelming. In one of his previous lives, the Weasley family had been larger by two young girls, Annie and Peggy, who had been abducted by Death Eaters before Ron was born. These two children had been playing in the park close to the Weasley home, while being watched over by their older brothers; Bill and Charlie; Percy was only a year old.

Who would Harry ask? If he asked Mr. or Mrs. Weasley and it was true, it would cause too much pain, if it wasn't true, they would think Harry was crazy. "Charlie!" Harry thought to himself, that's who I'll ask. He looked around the room, and saw Charlie sitting alone in the kitchen. "It's now or never." Harry thought. He quietly snuck out of the living room, and sat next to Charlie.

"Charlie? Can I ask you something?" Harry asked tentatively.

"Of course Harry, anything," he answered honestly.

"Just don't ask why I'm asking, but." Harry paused, looking for just the right way to phrase it. "Are there any other Weasley children, I don't know about?" He asked quickly. Charlie snapped to attention.

"That's an odd question, aren't there enough. Why are you asking?" He asked in a quiet voice.

"Please Charlie; do you have any other brothers or sisters I don't know about?" He asked again.

"No Harry, there are none." Charlie said looking mournful. A rush of relief crept over Harry.

"Good, not in this timeline." He thought to himself, while rising to return to the party.

"But," Charlie continued, looking even more mournful. "Two of our sisters died." Charlie finished. It was Harry's turn to snap to attention.

"What were their names? And were they younger than you, or older?" Harry asked now feeling nervous. Charlie stared at him.

"Their names were Annie and Peggy, and they were between me and Percy, why?" Now Charlie seemed nervous.

"I can't answer yet, but are you sure they're dead?" Harry's words were bringing up new questions in Charlie, questions he would not have dared to ask himself.

"Very sure, they were hit by a muggle car when Percy was very young." He answered.

"Could," Harry faltered. "Could, that memory have been implanted?" Charlie stood bolt upright. He grabbed Harry.

"What do you know?" He demanded.

"Nothing, I swear it!" Harry exclaimed. "I've had a recurring dream over the last three years that two young girls, who look exactly like

Ginny, were taken by Death Eaters, and two teenagers, who look like you and Bill, were searching for them.” Harry lied.

Charlie let go of Harry, and sat back down. “That’s some dream.” Charlie said emotionlessly. Harry eyed him for a moment.

“Is it possible?” Harry asked again. “Yes, I guess it could be.” Charlie said, looking at the floor. “I’ve had dreams where Bill, mom, dad and I are walking around a park shouting out their names.” Charlie said, still surveying the floor. “But I don’t think that’s related.”

“Have you ever asked your parents about them?” Harry asked, now concerned for his friend. “They forbade Bill and me from ever discussing it.” He said simply.

“My dreams may be a lead, you know, specifically for Peggy.” Harry said, causing Charlie to snap up again.

“Really,” Charlie asked.

“I don’t want to get anybody’s hopes up, so I’ll look into them, and get back to you.” Harry said, unwilling to give him any more information.

“Harry, you can’t go around investigating this by yourself, let me go with you.” Charlie said, concerned for Harry. “No. It’s not necessary; I can take care of myself.” Harry got a wicked smile. “As you already know,” he added.

The party ended shortly thereafter. Harry started saying his goodnights to everybody, and went upstairs.

As Harry prepared for bed, he decided Peggy Weasley should be the next order of business. First thing in the morning, he would use the memories from his previous life to track her down. He MUST track her down he thought.

Chapter 4 – The Weasley Sisters

Harry awoke on the morning of August 1st; he had already made up his mind to find Peggy Weasley, one of the two missing Weasley girls. The Peggy Weasley from the other timeline had been a well-known Astrologer, and fortuneteller, so Harry decided to start there.

Harry knew finding Peggy would take more than magic, it would require a complete understanding of the muggle internet. He needed Hermione.

Harry dressed quickly, and ran down to the kitchen in search of Hermione, who, typically was awake before him. Harry found her reading in the sitting room with Ginny across from her.

“Um, Hermione, can we talk outside?” Harry asked.

Hermione looked up. “Good morning to you, too.” She said shortly.

“Oh, sorry, good morning.” He corrected. “Can I please see you outside?” He added.

Hermione huffed at Harry as she rose from her chair, and followed him outside.

“What’s up?” She asked once they were out of everyone earshot.

“I need to ask for a favor, but you can’t tell ANYONE what you’re doing.” He said cryptically.

“Ok.” She said in a confused tone.

“I’ve been having a recurring dream,” he began, using the same lie he told Charlie. “I keep seeing two Weasley girls, both older than Percy getting kidnapped by Death Eaters. I approached Charlie last night , and he confirmed the Weasley’s had two girls, nut he says they died in a car accident.” Harry explained, pausing for breath.

“Are you serious?” Hermione asked.

“Yeah. But here’s the favor, I think they’re still alive, but I can’t find them on my own. I don’t know muggle computers that well.” Harry added sheepishly.

“Harry, are you sure this is a dream, and not a vision from You Know Who?” She asked nervously.

“I’m positive; just don’t ask me why I’m positive.” He explained.

“Ok Harry, I’ll help. What was her name?” Hermione asked.

“Peggy, Peggy Weasley. Though it could be almost anything now.” He added.

They made arrangements to stop at a muggle coffee shop on the day they were to go to Diagon Alley. Hermione had convinced the Weasley parents that the information they were researching was vital to what Voldemort was doing. They begrudgingly agreed.

Harry dressed, and ran down to breakfast, on the morning of August 15th. He had been forewarned by Arthur Weasley that their Hogwarts letters would arrive that day and they would all be going into Diagon Alley together.

Harry found two envelopes sitting on the kitchen table, and Hermione standing in the corner reading a third.

“Is it them?” Harry asked, referring to the letter Hermione was reading.

“Yes. But something seems strange, there’s no book for Defense Against the Dark Arts.” She explained.

“Who cares. So long as we can go to Diagon Alley.” Harry retorted, quickly scanning the book list.

When Ron and Ginny arrived, they ate quickly and prepared for the floo trip to the Leaky Cauldron.

Upon arrival, Harry and Hermione told the Weasleys they were going across the street to the café.

They café was jammed full of muggles, entering, exiting, drinking, luckily for Harry, there was one available terminal.

Hermione made short work of the task. She began running searches on the names Annie and Peggy Weasley, unfortunately the search engine returned over ten million hits.

“This is going to be a long day.” Hermione huffed.

Two hours into the endeavor, Hermione came across an old newspaper article.

‘Sister fortunetellers, Annie and Peggy Smith of Little Whinging, Surrey, had the distinct honor of telling the Queen’s fortune today. They arrived early yesterday morning at Buckingham Palace, only to be met with a mob of reporters yearning to hear their story. The contents of the actual session are obviously secret, but inside sources claim the Queen was in high spirits after their session. This reporter...’

“Harry, I think I’ve found something.” Hermione said, calling Harry over.

Harry read the article. “That’s got to be them, run a search on Annie and Peggy Smith.” He told her.

“Already done.” Hermione answered, handing Harry a piece of paper.

Harry couldn’t believe his luck. “They’re still in Little Whinging!” Harry said out loud.

“Does this means Ron’s sisters are alive?” Hermione asked, not really expecting an answer.

“Yeah, but you can’t say anything yet.” Harry told her.

“But why?” She asked.

“We should talk to them first. Just in case we’re wrong.” Harry answered, hoping Hermione believed him.

“Ok, but you have to promise you won’t go see them alone.” She said.

“I promise.” Harry lied.

They took the information and returned to Diagon Alley. They quickly met up with the Weasley’s and continued their shopping adventure.

“Let’s go see Fred and George.” Ron recommended to the group.

“I have to go to Gringotts, I’ll meet you guys there.” Harry said.

“All right dear, but hurry back.” Mrs. Weasley said.

Harry announced himself to the Head Goblin. “Harry Potter, I’d like to go into my vault please.” He said, handing the goblin his key.

The Head Goblin gave the key to another, who bade Harry to follow him.

They arrived at the vault moments after they boarded the rail car. Harry did not recognize the vault.

“Do you have the correct vault?” He asked the goblin.

“Of course, Mr. Potter.” He said shortly.

The goblin inserted the key and moments later the door swung open. Harry was mesmerized. He had never seen so much gold.

“I think there is a mistake.” He finally said.

“No mistake, we combined your previous inheritance with your new inheritance, just as our letter indicated.” The goblin explained.

“What letter, what inheritance?” Harry asked, now feeling dumbstruck.

“Why the Black family inheritance, of course. Didn’t you get our letter?” The goblin inquired.

“No, I never received any letter from Gringotts.” Harry explained.

“Well, your assets have grown exponentially, in gold alone, it has grown by a factor of twelve, paper assets by even more than that.” The goblin elaborated.

Harry entered the vault and removed several hundred galleons and all the so called “paper assets” the goblin mentioned. And they were considerable.

Harry left Gringotts and met up with the Weasley’s as they were emerging from ‘Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes’.

“Harry, you missed it, this place is incredible.” Ron said excitedly.

“That’s ok, I’ll catch it next time.” Harry said distractedly.

“Is everything ok, Harry?” Ginny asked.

“Fine.” Was all Harry could say.

That night, Harry sat alone in Ron’s room going over all his newfound wealth.

“I own the Three Broomsticks, I thought Madam Rosemerta owned the Three Broomsticks, go figure.” Harry said to himself, paging through the nearly endless lists of deeds, titles, and contracts.

“What’ya doin’, Harry?” Ron asked, jumping on the bed.

“Oh, nothing.” Harry answered, quickly locking everything in his trunk.

Ron shrugged, changed, and went to bed. Harry followed his example.

Harry awoke the next morning to find a tawny owl standing on his chest. “I guess you have something for me?” Harry jokingly said to the owl. He reached out and grabbed his copy of the Daily Prophet, paid the owl, gave it one of Hedwig’s treats, and sent it on its way. Harry sat back in bed reading the paper. The headline jumped out at him.

Cornelius Fudge, Minister or Moron?
By Rita Skeeter

This reporter has learned that the Minister of Magic; Cornelius Fudge, has known about the return of He Who Must Not Be Named for over a year. Sources close to the Minister confirm that he willingly allowed a Dementor to “Kiss” the one man who could have confirmed Harry Potter’s story after the Tri-wizard Tournament, last June. Barty Crouch Jr., the son of the late head of the Department of International Magical Cooperation, was impersonating the famous Auror, Alastor Moody, for an entire year, furthering the Dark Lord’s rise. Rather than listening to the testimony of Crouch, under Veritum serum, he allowed the Dementor to remove his soul through his mouth, leaving Crouch an empty shell. When Fudge learned of the events of that night, he adamantly claimed those involved were mad, and proceeded to deny the existence of the Dark Lord, leaving the wizarding community defenseless against his Death Eaters. This reporter has further learned that Minister Fudge has been regularly meeting with now convicted Death Eater; Lucius Malfoy, behind closed doors. Is the Minister guilty of conspiring with the Dark Lord, or just guilty of stupidity? Either way, the Daily Prophet is calling for the Minister to step down, and allow a competent wizard to take his place.

The article continued for several pages, with pictures of the Minister in ridiculous poses. Harry laughed in spite of himself. “Skeeter finally did something right.” Harry thought to himself.

As soon as he had read the entire article, Harry dressed and went down to breakfast, but stopped at the bottom of the stairs, where Hermione and Ginny were listening to the conversation transpiring in the kitchen.

“Sure you don’t need any ‘extendable ears’, Harry quipped.

“Shhhhh.” They both said together.

“What’s up?” He asked.

“Dumbledore’s in there. He’s trying to convince dad to run for minister.” Ginny answered.

Harry smiled to himself. "Just like in the other timeline." He thought.

Harry smiled to Ginny, and proceeded to walk straight into the kitchen.

"Don't." Hermione began, but Harry ignored her.

"Good morning." Harry said brightly, causing them all to jump.

"Harry, dear." Molly began. "Could you give us a moment?" She asked politely.

"Oh, no need for me to leave, of course Arthur's going to run. But his problem is financing." Harry explained.

"Exactly, that's what I've been trying to say." Arthur agreed.

"Arthur, we can raise money." Dumbledore said unconvincingly.

"Oh, don't bother, professor, I'll finance it." Harry said distractedly while he poured himself a cup of tea.

"Oh Harry, we couldn't allow that." Molly said.

"I'll go to Gringotts later today." Harry said, ignoring Molly, causing Dumbledore to smile.

"You have no excuses, Arthur." Dumbledore said, smiling at Harry.

"Harry, campaigns are expensive, it would cost thousands of galleons." Arthur said pleadingly.

"How many?" Harry asked, not really caring about the answer.

"At least ten, maybe even twenty thousand." Arthur answered.

"You'll have it in an hour." Harry answered, walking out of the kitchen.

"Harry!" Arthur called after him.

"Harry's right, dad." Ginny said, stopping her father as he chased Harry.

“See Arthur, everything’s settled.” Dumbledore said, now smiling at Ginny.

“I don’t know.” Arthur said to Dumbledore, then turned to Harry, who had sat down on the sofa, “Harry, are you sure you can afford this?” He added.

“Are you kidding, I could fund your campaign for the next five years, and not put a dent in my vault.” Harry answered smugly.

“Excuse me?” Hermione said, suddenly entering the conversation.

“Oh, did I forget to mention, Sirius named me beneficiary. He left me the entire Black family fortune.” Harry answered, now trying desperately to keep from laughing.

“Yes you did.” Hermione said, placing her hands on her hips, trying to look as stern as she could.

“Oops.” Harry said, now totally losing his composure.

“Perhaps I could speak to Harry in the kitchen?” Dumbledore asked, motioning to Harry to follow him.

Harry rose and followed Dumbledore into the kitchen.

“Harry, are you sure about this?” Dumbledore asked.

“Yes.” He answered, completely seriously.

“Then I think we should make arrangements to get you to Gringotts.” Dumbledore recommended.

“I could go now.” Harry said.

“Oh?” Dumbledore said through his half-moon spectacles.

“I don’t want anyone to know, but I can apparate.” Harry explained.

“One of your new tricks, I presume.” The Headmaster surmised.

“One of many.” Harry answered back.

“Be that as it may, but we’ll still have to come up with an excuse to get you outside, the Burrow has anti-apparition charms on it.” Dumbledore pointed out.

“Not for me.” Harry answered simply.

“Oh?” Dumbledore said again.

“I learned some VERY advanced apparition.” Harry said proudly.

“You have twenty minutes, after that, you’re on your own.” Dumbledore said, making Harry immediately apparate to Gringotts.

The trip only lasted ten minutes, Harry apparated directly to the Gringotts’ front door, walked in, retrieved his money and returned.

“Impressive.” Dumbledore said when Harry returned with two large bags of gold.

“Thank you.” Harry said humbly.

“A most useful trick, indeed. Could you teach it?” Dumbledore asked.

“Oh yeah. Why, do you want me to teach it to the students?” Harry asked.

Dumbledore smiled to himself. “Perhaps Harry, perhaps.” Was all he said, he just motioned towards the door, and Harry followed him out.

“It’s settled Arthur, starting tomorrow, you are a candidate for the position of Minister of Magic.” Dumbledore announced.

Harry took the two bags of gold, which were almost as large as him, and placed them on the coffee table.

“Wow, how much is that?” Ginny and Hermione said together.

“Ten thousand galleons. Hermione, could you get in touch with Rita Skeeter and have her meet me?” Harry asked.

“Why would you want to talk to her?” Hermione asked disgusted.

“Because I’m going to tell the world that Arthur Weasley is the right candidate for the job, what’s the point of being famous if you can’t stick your nose in politics?” Harry explained.

“Yes Harry, a most astute political move, I will also be speaking with Miss Skeeter.” Dumbledore added.

“Molly, may I use your fireplace?” Hermione asked.

“Yes dear.” Molly answered, already with tears in her eyes.

“Did I miss something?” Ron asked, walking down the stairs.

Harry spent the remainder of the summer holiday between telling any reporter with a camera and a quill, that Arthur Weasley was Harry’s candidate for the position of Minister of Magic and attempting to make heads and tails of the Black family fortune.

Two days before the end of the holiday, Harry made arrangements with Dumbledore to act as an alibi as Harry would investigate the Weasley sisters, though Harry did not tell him exactly what he was investigating.

Harry awoke early that morning and apparated back to Little Whinging.

Harry spent the morning just watching the Weasley sisters and pretending to be on the internet.

“Would you like anymore coffee?” Peggy asked.

“No thank you.” Harry said.

“Do you live around here, dear?” She asked pleasantly.

“Um, yes, not far, on Privet Drive.” He answered, taking the last sip from his coffee.

“Ah, lovely little homes on Privet Drive. I live in Guildford Villas.” She explained, wondering why he was staring at her.

"I'm sorry." Harry began. "But you look amazingly like my friend's family, what is your name?" Harry asked, noticing she had no nametag.

"Peggy. My sister Annie and I own this café." She answered.

"What's your last name?" He asked tentatively.

"Um," she faltered. "Potter," she lied.

"Now there's an interesting name, let me introduce myself, I'm Harry Potter." Harry said with a sly smile. She turned beet red.

"Pleased to meet you," she said taking his hand. The effect was instantaneous, her eyes rolled into the back of her head, and she dropped to the floor.

"Peggy? Peggy, do you hear me?" Annie's voice seemed distant and desperate.

"What's your name again?" She asked, turning to Harry.

"Harry." He said.

"Go to the counter, grab a towel, dip it in cold water, and bring it to me." She commanded. Harry turned to go, but another voice stopped him.

"Don't bother Harry, I'm fine." It was Peggy.

"Oh Peggy, you gave me such a fright." Her sister said.

"Annie, I think we have our answers." Peggy said motioning to Harry.

"Answers, what answers? Did you hit your head?" Annie said concernedly.

"I touched his hand Annie, you know what that means." Peggy replied, giving her sister a knowing look.

"You saw his future?" She asked.

"No, I saw ours." Peggy responded in an amazed voice.

"Ours, how did you see ours? We have never been able to see our own past or future." Annie said, now hoping this was true.

"Ask Harry." She said smiling.

Annie rounded on Harry. "What is she talking about?" She demanded. Harry knew this meant he had to come clean.

"You are Annie and Peggy Weasley, the daughters of Molly and Arthur Weasley. You were abducted when you were children from a park in Ottery St. Catchpole. You both had your memories modified so that you wouldn't remember them or return to them on your own. Let's see, you have two older brothers, four younger brothers, and one younger sister. Your home is called the Burrow. And, oh yeah, you're witches." Harry said breathlessly.

The sisters stared at each other; it was Peggy who spoke first. "Told you," she said to her sister.

"My vision had us meeting our real family for the first time, a whole houseful." Peggy said.

"I can't believe it. I want to believe it, but I can't." Annie said to her younger sister.

"I have never steered you wrong, Annie, believe me when I say Harry is the REAL THING." Peggy replied.

"The real what," Annie demanded.

"He's a wizard." She said simply.

"A what," Annie asked again.

"Show her Harry, I know you can." Peggy said to Harry, giving him a knowing look. Harry looked around the back room of the café, and apparated right next to Annie.

"Is that proof enough." Harry said with a huge smile. The look on Annie's face said it all.

"I guess so." Peggy answered him.

The newly found Weasley sisters and Harry spent the remainder of the afternoon talking about the wizarding world at large, but more often, the Weasley family. Harry explained to them that he was an orphan, and the Weasleys have become his surrogate family since finding out about the wizarding world. They seemed thrilled to be related to such a great family. Unfortunately Harry felt the need to also tell them about the bad side of the wizarding world, Voldemort, and the wayward son, Percy.

The girls took it in stride. They had commented that all families have skeletons in their closet, and if the wizarding world has only one evil madman with followers, then it's doing better than the regular world. Closing time arrived without waning; Harry had finally decided to ask the question he wanted to ask.

"Do you want to meet them?" He asked. The girls looked at each other.

"Of course," they screamed simultaneously. Harry was so relieved.

"When do you want to go?" He asked. Again the girls looked at each other.

"Now," they screamed again. Harry laughed.

"I think we should put it off until tomorrow, remember, your parents don't even know I'm looking for you. This is going to be quite a shock. But if you like, I'll go talk to them right now, and try to explain this to them as delicately as possible." Harry answered.

"OK Harry, you go talk to them, but if they want to see us now, I want you to come right back and get us, anytime." Peggy said forcefully.

"Deal," Harry said before apparating away.

The Weasley house was quiet, the children were de-gnoming the garden, Molly was cooking dinner, and Arthur was going over paperwork he had been neglecting at the Ministry. There was a loud knock on the door, Arthur stood. I'll get it Molly dear, you finish." Arthur said to his wife. Arthur strode the length of the house to the front door. Upon opening, he was shocked by who was standing there.

"Harry! What are you doing back so soon?" He said taking Harry's hand. "I have urgent business with you and Molly." Harry said, not looking as urgent as he sounded.

"Molly dear, can you come out to the sitting room?" He yelled to his wife while ushering Harry to the sofa.

"Harry dear, is something the matter?" She asked concerned.

"No Molly, I just HAVE to talk to the two of you." Harry said still sounding urgent.

"Of course Harry dear, what is it?" Molly said, sitting on one of the chairs.

"Now, please don't deny anything, because I already know but, I've found your daughters." Harry said quickly.

"What are you on about, Harry," asked Arthur.

"I know your two daughters, Annie and Peggy were abducted from the park many years ago, I know you believe they're dead, and I know you altered the memories of Bill and Charlie. But before you get upset, I FOUND THEM!" Harry emphasized. Molly had tears in her eyes, and no voice to speak with. Arthur stared blankly at Harry.

"You found them, alive?" Arthur could hardly speak.

"Alive and well, living in the muggle world." Harry said as Molly began to cry openly.

"My babies, you found my babies?" Molly asked and yelled at the same time.

“Yes Molly, I did. And if you want, I can bring them to you tomorrow.” Harry said, now feeling the emotions in the room.

“Please Harry get them now! Bring them to me! Now! Please!” Molly screamed. Harry didn’t need telling twice. He ran out the door so he could apparate without them seeing.

“Could he be serious Arthur, Could they still be alive?” Molly said through her tears. Arthur was openly crying as well, if any of the other children or Hermione had come in at that time, they’d have thought the Weasley parents had gone mad.

After an endless minute, there was another knock at the door. Molly and Arthur turned towards the door.

“MY BABIES,” Molly screamed, louder than Harry had ever heard. She ran up to them, recognizing them instantly. Arthur was only a step behind.

“Oh my girls, I’ve missed you so!” He exclaimed while taking Molly’s lead and hugging them both tightly. “MOMMY?” Peggy bellowed.

“I remember!” Annie said, now obviously remembering her family vividly.

Harry was now crying openly. There was so much emotion in the room, he couldn’t stop himself. The hugging and kissing lasted almost an hour, when a booming voice came from the kitchen.

“MUM, when’s dinner,” bellowed Ron. “MUM, where are you!” He bellowed again. Harry took it upon himself to intercept Ron before walking in on such a strange site. Harry ran into the kitchen.

“Alright Ron?” Harry said, drying his eyes.

“Harry, what’s going on, mate?” Ron asked perplexed.

“Let’s go outside, I want to talk to you and Ginny.” Harry said, leading Ron to the door.

Harry sat with Ron, Hermione and Ginny out in the yard on the grass. "Ron, Ginny, do you guys consider Hermione and me family?" Harry asked, preparing to break the happy news.

"We don't consider you guys family, you ARE family." Ron said without hesitation.

"Good." Harry went on. "I have come in to some information about OUR family that you two, no three..." He said motioning to Hermione. "...need to know." Ron nodded to Harry to continue. "Ron, Ginny, you have sisters." Harry said quickly. Ginny started laughing.

"Oh Harry, you know I'm the only girl." Ginny said, honestly.

"Well Ginny, you're wrong, you have two older sisters?" Harry asked grinning.

"Come on mate, what are you on about?" Ron interjected.

"Ron, you and your family are the only family I have, you, that is to say we, have two older sisters, Annie and Peggy Weasley." Harry said, now a little flustered.

"Oh please Harry, tell me you're serious." Ginny said, now sounding excited.

"I am serious Gin; they're inside with your mom and dad." Harry said with a smile. Ginny and Hermione jumped off the grass, and ran into the house. Ron just continued staring at Harry.

"Serious?" He asked simply.

"Very." Harry retorted.

Ron jumped to his feet, and ran the length of the yard to the back door. Harry decided to give them a little privacy before joining them. Harry hadn't been sitting long, when he heard the Weasley's back door.

"Is there something you want to tell me?" Harry turned towards Hermione's voice.

“Not really.” Harry said shortly.

“Harry, we’ve been best friends since Halloween night of our first year at Hogwarts, we’ve been through everything together, tell me what’s going on.” Hermione sounded forceful.

“I can’t talk about it Hermione, let’s just say I’ve gotten some added training and information since school ended.” Harry chose his words carefully.

“You know I’m not going to let this die, what is with you?” She pressed. Harry looked down at the grass.

“I’ve changed Hermione; I’m not the same person anymore. I know things; things I didn’t even know were possible.” Harry said downheartedly.

“Like what?” Hermione pressed on while sitting beside him. “I know how to apparate, I’m an animagus, I can perform wandless magic, and I can perform elemental magic.” Harry looked over at Hermione. “I think that’s it.” Harry lied.

“Harry, an animagus, wandless and elemental magic, you can’t be serious?” Hermione was now totally floored.

“As serious as the Weasley daughters,” Harry answered.

Hermione contemplated what she had just heard. “What kind of animal are you?” She asked. Harry looked into her eyes, and immediately changed into a griffin. He spread his wings when he heard Hermione gasp, then immediately changed back. “Wow Harry, a magical creature, that’s really advanced magic.” She said excitedly.

“Really?” Harry said, knowing how advanced it really was.

“Can you show me some wandless magic?” She asked. Without a word, Hermione started to rise up off the floor. She went up about ten feet before she yelled down to Harry. “Alright, all right let me down!” She cried. Harry quickly obliged.

Hermione started a barrage of questions. Harry was only half listening, and answered each question without thinking. He knew this was a typical reaction by Hermione, but it annoyed him just the same.

"Hermione listen, it's very important that you NOT tell anyone about me, not even Ron, do you understand?" Harry sounded serious.

"Why not Ron," she asked confused. "He can't keep a secret, especially when he's mad." Harry answered automatically.

"I promise." She said simply.

"Where are my OTHER children?" Harry heard Molly yell. Harry and Hermione stood as one, and moved towards Molly. Molly met them halfway, and took them both in a tremendous bear hug.

"I am so happy." She whispered to Harry. "Now," Molly began, wiping the tears from her eyes. "I want all the WHOLE family inside." She emphasized the word "whole". Molly led the other two back inside.

Arthur and Ron were sitting talking to Annie, while Ginny was talking to Peggy. Neither Harry nor Hermione had ever seen the Weasleys happier. Harry and Hermione sat next to Ginny and Peggy, while Molly prepared dinner for the entire group.

"Everyone alright here," Harry asked Ginny and Peggy. He was amazed how alike they looked. They both, with no preamble, leaned into Harry and kissed him on opposite cheeks. Harry blushed.

"You gave me my family, Harry. I'll never be able to thank you." Peggy said, reaching over to kiss Harry again.

"Me too," came the voice of Annie, who likewise kissed Harry. Harry turned to Ron.

"If YOU try to kiss me, I'll slug you." Harry said jokingly. They all laughed.

The girls got up to help Molly in the kitchen. Harry was left with Arthur and Ron. "Harry? I presume this is one of those things Dumbledore did not want me to ask about?" He asked more than stated.

“Sorry Arthur, I can’t talk about it.” Harry said sadly.

“I don’t care if you ever explain it to me; I’m forever in your debt.”
Arthur said honestly.

Chapter 5

Harry awoke on the morning of September 1st, refreshed, and ready to tackle a new year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. It had been decided previously, that they were going to take the floo network to the Leaky Cauldron, and from there, the Ministry would provide cars to King's Cross Station. Arthur had quickly become the leading candidate for the position of Minister of Magic. It did not come as a shock to most, as Arthur had the public backing of the two most well known wizards in all of Britton; Albus Dumbledore, headmaster at Hogwarts, and Harry Potter, the Chosen One.

The normally press shy Potter, had taken every opportunity to tell reporters he supported Arthur Weasley for the position of Minister of Magic. Albus Dumbledore had held several press conferences to ensure there was no mistake that Arthur Weasley was the man for the job.

Harry showered and dressed, before Ron had even woken up. Harry quietly crept down to the kitchen to cook breakfast for the four of them. He walked in to find Molly already dressed and cooking breakfast. "Good morning, Harry dear." Molly said brightly. "All ready for your first day back?" She asked.

"Yeah, and it's Friday too, we'll have the whole weekend before we start." Harry responded.

"Need any help, Molly?" Harry asked graciously.

"Thank you dear, if you could start on the bacon." She directed him, motioning to the frying pan.

The morning pandemonium made Harry smile. The girls were frantically searching for last minute additions to their packing. Ron hadn't attempted to start packing until after breakfast. Only Harry had had the foresight to pack completely the night before. "I'm turning into Hermione." Harry thought to himself.

The time to leave had finally arrived. Hermione was the first to step up to the fireplace. Harry took down the floo powder from the mantle,

and held it out to her. She threw the powder in, and yelled; “Leaky Cauldron” as clear as possible. She emerged in the Leaky Cauldron a few moments later.

When the group stepped out onto the curb, they were all shocked to see the cars the Ministry had provided; two stretch limousines parked along side the curb. After the Ministry wizards placed their belongings in the trunks of the cars, Harry opened the rear passenger door to reveal, not the inside of a car, but a large waiting room, fully stocked with overstuffed chairs, and a tele. “Wow,” was all Harry could say.

They reached Kings Cross Station with twenty minutes to spare. Harry and Ron helped unload the cars, and they proceeded to platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$.

They each crossed the barrier in turn.

The Hogwarts Express was as beautiful as ever. The perfectly shined, red locomotive peered at them, as they made their way to the passenger cars.

Molly began hugging them all in her typical, motherly fashion, while Arthur took Harry aside. “Take care of yourself Harry. Try to stay out of trouble.” Arthur warned.

“Don’t worry about me Arthur; I may have some tricks up my sleeve, just in case.” Harry explained ominously. “You though, Arthur, make sure you win that election. Ron and I would love to hold this over Malfoy’s head.” Harry joked. Arthur laughed.

“I’ll try Harry.” He said laughing.

The Hogwarts Express blew its whistle, it was time to go. “Good bye Harry, dear. Do be careful this year.” She pleaded, giving him an extra long hug, and kiss.

“I will Molly.” Harry promised. Harry turned to see Ron and Ginny looking at him strangely.

“Jealous?” Harry joked. Ginny laughed, Ron just leered at him.

They were about to board the train, when Harry heard a familiar voice cry out.

“Harry!” Harry turned to see Neville Longbottom walking up to him, with two adults Harry recognized immediately; Neville’s parents. Harry hadn’t thought much about the instrumental role he had played in helping Neville’s parents regain their sanity.

“Neville, good to see you mate,” Harry said, shaking his hand.

“These are my parents.” Neville announced to the group. “Mum, dad, this is Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny.” Neville explained to his parents. It was apparent to Harry that the Longbottoms were clear, that Harry could not be implicated in their sudden recovery.

“Ah, the crew that infiltrated the Ministry, a complete pleasure to meet you all,” Neville’s dad said shaking all their hands.

The whistle blew again.

“Got to go mum,” Neville said, giving his mother a hug and kiss. “Bye dad.” He continued, giving his father a hug.

“Have a good year son, and your mother and I will be waiting here when you come back at Christmas.” His father replied.

Harry and Neville turned to go find an available compartment; Ron, Hermione and Ginny went to the prefect’s compartment. Ginny had received her prefect letter and pin the week before term started. Harry and Neville quickly found an empty compartment, stowed their belongings, and sat down.

“Harry, I don’t know how to thank you. The last few weeks have been the happiest of my life.” Neville said appreciatively.

“Remember Neville, I didn’t have anything to do with that.” Harry corrected him.

“Oh yeah, I know.” Neville said, giving Harry a wink. Harry smiled back.

The door to the compartment opened, Harry was face to face with Cho Chang. Only this time, it was a new Harry, one who doesn't get tongue-tied, one who doesn't blush, and one who has the memories of making love to Cho, how beautiful she looked naked, and most importantly, the memory of her cheating on him.

"Hi Cho," Harry said pleasantly. "Come in, sit down." Harry motioned to the bench facing him. She obliged.

"How was your summer?" She asked.

"Great. How was yours?" He questioned back.

"Not great, but not bad." She said honestly. "Are you going to continue the DA meetings this year?" She asked

"I don't know, I guess if Dumbledore says it's all right, I'd like to." Harry answered, fully expecting Dumbledore to teach the students advanced apparition.

"I hope so, we learned so much last year." She said

"I'll ask him tomorrow." He told her.

"Sounds great, hopefully I'll see you soon." She said, standing to go.

"You bet." Harry said simply.

Cho nodded, and left. Neville sat dumbstruck. "I think she likes you." Neville said.

"Yeah, well, I have my sights set higher this year." Harry said, like he was some ladies man.

Shortly after Cho had left, Ron, Hermione and Ginny arrived.

"Ron, you should have seen Cho earlier, I think she likes Harry." Neville said astounded.

"Yeah, that's old news." Ron answered.

Harry wasn't watching Ron's expression, but was more interested in Hermione's and Ginny's. They both had sour looks.

"Like I told Neville, I have my sights set higher." Harry told Ron, but trying to get a feel for Ginny.

"Who's the lucky girl?" Hermione asked him slyly.

"I'm not telling." Harry said smiling.

Harry watched Ginny's expression from the corner of his eye, he was not disappointed. She had a longing look.

"Ron, you weed it out of him, I'm not going to try." Hermione said to Ron.

"Oh no, not me," Ron said. They all laughed.

Hermione decided to engage in her prefect's duties and walk the train. She coerced Ron into joining her.

"I think they want to be alone." Harry whispered to Ginny. She giggled.

"Probably," she whispered back. "So Harry, who are you going after this year?" Ginny asked him, secretly hoping it was her.

"You of course," Harry said honestly.

Ginny was speechless. Did she just hear him correctly? Did the object of her desires for so long actually tell her he was pining for her?

"I'm sorry, what did you say?" She asked, hoping she heard correctly.

"I said you, of course." Harry said, without even a hint of embarrassment.

"Uh, uh, did you just say me?" She asked again, still not believing what she had just heard.

"Why, is that a problem for you?" Harry asked with a mockingly concerned tone.

“No, not at all,” she answered, still unwilling to believe her luck.

“Well, then why aren’t you kissing me?” He asked her slyly. She didn’t need asking twice. Ginny slid right next to him, and kissed him passionately on the mouth.

When they finally broke the kiss, Harry looked over at Neville who was staring with his mouth wide open.

“Oh, sorry mate, I forgot you were there.” Harry said.

“That’s ok.” Neville answered, still unsure about what he had just witnessed.

Ron and Hermione returned from their prefect duties to find Neville asleep on one side of the compartment, and Harry and Ginny laughing up a storm on the other.

“Don’t you two look cozy?” Hermione said knowingly.

“I could say the same for you.” Ginny responded, and the two girls giggled.

Ron sat very close to Hermione, giving Harry the impression that they’d finally come to terms with their feelings.

The remainder of the train ride was filled with various people entering and leaving their compartment. At some point, all of the DA members who were still in school had come to ask Harry the same question Cho had, apparently they, and a few others, were very interested in continuing. Hermione had pulled out the original DA roster, and added the names of the new recruits. The group had now grown to thirty, not counting Harry.

When they disembarked at the Hogsmeade station, Harry’s ears were met with a familiar cry. “Firs’ years, firs’ years this way,” it was the Care of Magical Creatures teacher, and Harry’s good friend, Hagrid.

“Hey Hagrid,” Harry cried out, waving at Hagrid.

“Alrigh’ there Harry,” he yelled back.

“Alright,” he answered turning towards the carriages.

Harry went with Ron, Hermione, Ginny and Neville to the carriages. Harry, who prior to last year, thought the carriages were horseless, now knew they were being pulled by thestrals. Thestrals were skeletal flying horses that can only be seen by people who have “seen death”.

Harry walked up to the thestral pulling the carriage Ron had claimed for the group, and petted it lovingly, remembering their help in getting him and his friends to the Ministry the year before. Harry turned and entered the carriage, it moved immediately.

The night had turned out to be cloudless and warm, a perfect late summer evening. When the carriages had pulled up to the gates of Hogwarts, the five friends disembarked, and walked through the main entrance, into the Great Hall. The chattering of students and teachers was a most welcome sound for Harry; he was home. The five friends found seats quickly at the Gryffindor table, and sat in anticipation of the welcoming feast. Ron, as usual, was famished.

Harry scanned the teacher’s table, hoping to get a look at their new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. Harry didn’t see one; all the teachers were the same.

“This could be either good or bad.” Harry thought. Hermione had obviously been watching where Harry was looking.

“I don’t see any new teachers, do you?” She asked, craning her neck.

“No.” Harry answered distractedly.

Dumbledore tapped his glass, and the room fell silent. The main doors opened, and in came Professor McGonagall carrying a three-legged stool, and an old wizard’s hat. Behind her came the group of first years that had obviously just arrived with Hagrid. McGonagall led them to the front of the Great Hall, and placed the stool in front of Dumbledore, and the hat on the stool. A line formed on the hat resembling a mouth, and the hat began to sing.

Harry did not pay attention to it's song; he was preoccupied wondering who the new teacher would be. Then he saw him. Entering from the anti-room behind the teacher's table was none other than Charlie Weasley.

"So this is the job he got closer to home." Harry thought to himself. He tapped Ron on the shoulder, and pointed in Charlie's direction. Ron was awestruck. He stared while tapping Ginny, as Harry had done to him. She and Hermione followed Ron's stare, and gasped.

"It's Charlie!" Ginny exclaimed.

Evidently the hat had stopped singing; the entire room had burst into applause. McGonagall began reading the names of the first years that were about to be sorted into their houses.

"Did you know Charlie was teaching here?" Ron asked Harry.

"I had no clue. He told me he got a job closer to home, but he never said what." Harry answered, still staring at Charlie.

"Maybe he wanted it to be a surprise." Hermione offered.

"Maybe," Ron said.

The sorting ended, neither Harry nor his friends had any clue how many new Gryffindor there were, because they never heard the sorting. Dumbledore stood.

"Let's the feast begin." He said pleasantly. All at once, the tables were full of food and drink. Ron had completely forgotten about Charlie, his hunger took over. The students and teachers ate and drank their fill. When dinner was finally over, Dumbledore stood.

"Another year of learning ahead of us, another year behind I would like to welcome our new potions master, Charlie Weasley." The students applauded.

"Potions Master," asked Ron. "Then what is Snape doing?" But no one had a chance to answer.

"This year," Dumbledore continued. "Hogwarts will be having two Defense Against the Dark Arts classes. The regular Defense Against the Dark Arts, taught by our former Potions Master, Professor Snape." The room mildly applauded. "And an Advanced Defense Against the Dark Arts, taught by one of our more well known students, Harry Potter," all the houses except Slytherin began applauding.

"Me?" Harry said as his housemates turned to look at him.

Dumbledore waited for the muttering to subside. "I'm sure those of you who attended Mr. Potter's class last year have been scheduled to attend this term, and any new students who signed up with Miss Granger on the Hogwarts Express will be welcomed as well." Dumbledore motioned to Hermione. "Now I know you're all most anxious to return to your houses, good night." Dumbledore finished.

The students began to rise and exit the Great Hall. Harry just sat there, riveted to his seat, and struck motionless by Dumbledore's announcement. Professor McGonagall made her way towards Harry.

"Mr. Potter." Harry turned to look at her. "The headmaster would like to see you and Miss Granger in his office." She said without feeling, turned and walked away. Harry turned to Hermione.

"What's going on?" He asked, completely bewildered. "I guess he really approved of the DA meetings last term." Hermione said with conviction.

They walked to the stone gargoyle guarding the stairs to the headmaster's office who immediately jumped out of Harry's way.

"Why did it do that?" Hermione asked Harry. Harry just shrugged at her and continued on to the headmaster's office. Harry knocked.

"Come in." Dumbledore said pleasantly. "Ah Harry, Miss Granger, please sit down." He waited until they were seated. "Miss Granger, I understand you have an updated list of students?" He asked, putting out his hand to receive it.

"Yes Professor." She said as she went into her bag for the list, and handed it to him. He read it calmly. "Ah yes, I see no conflicts." He

stated, handing Hermione the list. "The student's schedules will be handed out in the morning. Now, if you could excuse us, I need to talk to Harry alone." Dumbledore said brightly.

"Yes sir." She rose, and left the office.

"Harry, I hope I'm not putting undue pressure on you, but I feel your work last term aided the students in our time of need, and I want you to continue." Dumbledore eyed him intently.

"No sir, I don't think it's pressure I'm feeling, it's nerves. Last year we did this in secret, it was more of a rebellion, now I have to actually teach." Harry said worriedly.

"There is no difference between what you did last year, and what I want you to do this year, except, you know more magic, more than I would have ever expected." Harry didn't answer, he knew the headmaster had no idea how much he had learned. "If at anytime you feel you can't handle it, just let me know, and the students will be reunited with their classmates in Professor Snape's class." Dumbledore said with a smile.

"Somehow sir, I don't think the class would like that much, and it would greatly diminish my chances for survival." Harry said with a laugh.

Dumbledore looked seriously at Harry. "Teach them all you can, Harry. They may need to defend themselves sooner than they think, sooner than we think. You know what to do." Dumbledore said looking old and tired.

"Professor, they WILL learn how to defend themselves, and others, I guarantee it." Harry added, now feeling confident.

"Excellent!" Dumbledore exclaimed, now looking pleasant again. "I'll want to talk over your lesson plan in the morning, but for now, enjoy your first night back." With that, Harry excused himself from the headmaster, and left to join Hermione at the bottom of the stairs.

Harry and Hermione barely spoke as they walked back to the common room. Harry, though determined, was still in a state of shock that he had to teach.

“At least we don’t have Snape this year.” Hermione said, seemingly reading Harry’s mind.

“What?” He asked, still in shock.

“No Snape, he’s going to be teaching the other defense class, Charlie’s teaching Potions.” Hermione said in an obvious tone. Harry’s eyes grew larger.

“It didn’t even dawn on me, NO SNAPE!” Harry cried, and went into what appeared to be a jig. Hermione laughed, and joined in.

When they arrived at the picture of the Fat Lady, Hermione gave the password, and they entered. Harry noticed it immediately; it was like walking into noise itself. Someone had obviously placed a silencing charm on the room, and the students were celebrating.

“What are they celebrating?” Harry had to yell at Hermione for her to hear him even though she was standing right next to him.

“You,” she yelled back, pointing at a banner hanging over the fireplace. OUR NEW FAVORITE TEACHER, HARRY POTTER. The sign read.

All of the students who were in the DA kept coming up to congratulate Harry. Harry, Hermione, Ron, Neville and Ginny tried desperately to hide in a corner of the common room, to be able to talk, but the well-wishers would not allow it. It was way passed midnight when the five friends finally had a chance to talk.

“What do you think Dumbledore’s doing?” Ron asked the group, hoping not to insult Harry.

“I think he feels Harry did a great job last year, and wants him to continue.” Ginny said, smiling at Harry.

“Actually Ginny, I think he’s trying to get as many of the members of the Order into Hogwarts, that’s why he hired Charlie.” Harry answered honestly.

“Maybe, but that doesn’t explain why he gave you the position.” Hermione added.

“I think he wants me in the Order.” Harry speculated

“You? No offense Harry, but you’re still just a student.” Ron asked.

“He saw me beat five members of the Order in a duel this summer.” Harry answered.

“You dueled five members of the Order? How many did you beat?” Ron asked, obviously impressed.

“All of them.” Harry said, shrugging his shoulders. “At the same time,” Harry added.

“AT THE SAME TIME,” they all echoed together.

“Yeah, but it took two tries.” Harry answered in a small voice.

“And that’s why dad has been acting that way towards you.” Ginny added.

“Yes, well that and the ten thousand galleons I contributed to his campaign.” Harry joked.

“You gave Mr. Weasley ten THOUSAND galleons?” Neville asked stunned.

“Oh yeah, sorry Neville, you didn’t know, I’m Arthur’s financial backing.” Harry said matter-of-factly.

“Wow. That’s so cool. I do have another question, though, what is the Order?” Neville asked. They laughed; apparently, none of them realized Neville did not know about the Order.

“You explain it to him guys, I’m going to bed.” Harry announced, rising and turning towards Ginny, and giving her a long kiss goodnight.

When they broke, Harry turned to the rest. "Good night." He said. Ron just gaped, open-mouthed. "You explain it to him." Harry told Ginny.

Harry awoke the next morning before the sun; he dressed and went down to breakfast. He didn't know when he was to meet with the headmaster, but figured by eight o'clock would be fine. He decided to go to the kitchens to eat his breakfast, knowing full well he would not meet up with any students there.

He walked up to the painting of fruit, tickled the pear, and entered. He was immediately swarmed with house elves. The elves were asking him what he wanted, they were congratulating him on becoming a teacher, but Harry ignored them, he was looking for one particular elf, Dobby.

"Harry Potter sir, you is come to see Dobby, sir. 'Tis an honor sir," Dobby said in his squeaky voice.

"Dobby, I'd like some breakfast please." Harry told the elf.

"Yes sir, Harry Potter, sir." The house elf said and vanished. Harry sat down at one of the tables in the kitchen and waited. Dobby returned within seconds with a tray full of bacon, eggs, toast and pumpkin juice. He set the tray down.

"Dobby, sit down please, I'd like to talk to you." Harry told him, Dobby obeyed. "How is Winky these days?" Harry asked concernedly.

"She is in a most terrible state, Harry Potter, she is still drinking, and Dobby doesn't know what to do." Dobby answered sounding worried.

"I think I may have a solution, I'm going upstairs in a short while to meet with Dumbledore, when I come back we'll talk some more." Harry explained.

"Dobby will be waiting sir." Dobby said, and vanished with a pop.

Harry ate his breakfast in peace. Except for the occasional house elf cleaning, Harry was all alone. When he finished breakfast, he decided to go meet with Dumbledore. It was shortly before eight, when Harry knocked on the headmaster's door.

"Come in." Dumbledore's voice was heard from the other side. Even though it was still early on a Saturday morning, Dumbledore was dressed and wide-awake. "Good morning Harry, good to see you up and around so early." He said with a smile. Harry sat, and they began talking about the curriculum.

Harry spent the better part of the hour, discussing the various spells, charms and curses Harry knew without giving away ALL he knew. Dumbledore was stunned to see much of what Harry knew, was unknown to him. When all was settled, Harry took the opportunity to talk about the house elves.

"Professor, I was wondering a couple of things. The first is, well, I would like your permission to offer Dobby and Winky jobs." Harry said tentatively.

"May I ask why?" Dumbledore asked.

"Well sir, I think Winky's problem is that she has nobody to fuss over, she was used to working for one family, now she works here, with all these other house elves, if she worked for me alone, I think she would feel useful again, and hopefully stop drinking."

Harry could not stop himself from finishing the statement, he didn't know if Dumbledore knew her present condition.

"And Dobby," Dumbledore asked.

"Dobby is, well Dobby sir, he has this attachment to me ever since I freed him, I think he'd also be happier." Harry finished breathlessly.

"Yes, I do see the logic. You have my permission, but may I recommend keeping them here at Hogwarts, I don't think your aunt and uncle would appreciate them very much." Dumbledore said with a laugh.

"Yes sir, I plan to. The other thing," Harry paused. "I know of a particularly powerful group that could help us in our fight against Voldemort and his Death Eaters." Harry said.

"Who is the group, Harry?" Dumbledore asked, now looking interested.

"House elves, particularly the one hundred you have here at Hogwarts." Harry said straight-faced.

"And this knowledge, is it a Michael knowledge?" Dumbledore asked him.

"Actually, yes sir it is. I have trained house elves before; they saved the lives of all the teachers at this school." Harry said with pride.

"We both know that what happens in one timeline may not happen in another, but, we do need as many magical creatures to fight Voldemort as we can get. I think we should use them Harry. Would you like to take your previously held position back, and re-teach them?" The headmaster asked him, knowing the response.

"It would be an honor sir." He answered taking his leave from Dumbledore. Rather than leaving by means of the door, Harry apparated to the kitchens, leaving Dumbledore just as amazed as when he did it at the Burrow.

"Harry Potter sir, you is back." Dobby said, seeing Harry apparate into the kitchen.

"Dobby, I need to ask you something." Dobby looked at him wide eyed.

"Anything sir," he responded.

"I want you to work for me. I'll pay you..." Harry did not have a chance to finish his statement; Dobby flung himself at him, hugging his leg, squeaking.

"Dobby would love to sir, Dobby would love to!" Harry laughed in spite of himself.

"Then, as my official house elf, bring me Winky." Harry commanded playfully.

“Yes sir!” Dobby bellowed.

A moment later Dobby was back with Winky at his side. Harry was happy to see she was completely sober. Her once pink dress was stained to an unrecognizable color, and she seemed to have tears in her eyes.

“Winky, do you remember me?” Harry asked in a quiet voice. “Yes sir, you is Harry Potter.” Winky quietly squeaked back.

“I don’t think you’re happy here would you like to work for me and me alone?” Harry asked, still quietly.

“Truly sir, one master again,” she asked almost in tears again.

“Yes Winky, just me, you would have to stay here when I’m here, but once I leave, you leave with me.” Harry said in a soothing voice. Winky could hardly believe her ears, a family.

“Winky would love to sir.” She said, sounding as excited as Harry had ever heard her.

“In that case, Dobby,” Dobby snapped to attention. “Winky.” Winky snapped to attention. “We have work to do, I need to set up my lessons for Monday, meet me in the Room of Requirement.” Harry commanded and they both left with a pop. Harry laughed.

Shortly before noon that day, Ron decided to get the Marauder’s Map from Harry’s trunk to find where he was. Ron, accompanied by Hermione, Ginny and Neville, were staring at the map.

“There he is, in some tower room, this way.” Ron led them up several flights of stairs, and down a seldom-used corridor, to a tapestry in the middle of the hall. “Here, this is the entrance.” Ron pointed out. He pulled the tapestry to the side, to reveal a door; he opened it, and began to climb more stairs. When the four friends reach the top, they saw Harry, Dobby and Winky sitting around a piece of parchment, speaking in hush tones.

“Hey mate!” Ron called out to him. Harry turned, startled.

“Marauder’s Map I presume?” Harry asked.

“Yep,” Ron replied, holding up the map.

Ginny strode up to Harry and engaged him in a deep kiss.

“I’ll never get used to that.” Ron said to Hermione. She gave him a reproachful look.

“How did you ever find this place?” Hermione asked, taking Ron’s attention from Ginny.

“Oh, a little birdie told me.” Harry joked. Hermione turned to the house elves.

“Hello Dobby, hello Winky.” She said, moving towards them.

“Hello miss.” Dobby answered for both elves.

“What are you both doing here with Harry?” She asked. Dobby looked at Harry for permission to speak.

“Yeah Dobby, you can tell them.” Harry instructed.

“We is preparing an army against He Who Must Not Be Named.” Dobby explained.

“Now Dobby, what did I tell you.” Harry reprimanded him.

“Dobby is sorry sir.” Dobby said, now turning to Hermione. “I mean... Voldemort,” Dobby said, now feeling proud.

Neville flinched at the name, but the rest stood tall, even Ron. “An army, what kind of army,” Hermione asked, now feeling very curious.

“An elf army, miss,” Winky responded proudly. “We is going to fight, um, Voldemort and his Death Eaters.” Winky said, even more proudly than Dobby.

“A what,” Hermione bellowed. “Harry, you’re going to use slaves!” Hermione rounded on Harry.

“Hermione, please sit down. Nobody is going to use slaves. Every house elf we have recruited has accepted of his or her free will, none were ordered. Dumbledore has agreed with my decision to train the elves, we both feel they deserve the right to defend themselves and their families against Voldemort, and if you’d stop to think about it, free will is then first step to freedom.” Harry explained.

Hermione and the rest sat in silence. They had never heard Harry speak with such maturity, insight, and foresight. They were proud.

“OK.” Hermione conceded. “It could be a good idea.” She finished.

“Good, because you’re Captain Granger now, your job is to help train, and control the elves.” Harry said pointedly.

“Me. I’m not a military expert, I can’t lead them.” She said horror struck. “Don’t worry, Colonel Ronald Weasley can help you, won’t you Ron?” Harry asked, turning to Ron.

“Me, a Colonel, yeah, I’ll help.” Ron said proudly. Harry handed Ron a piece of parchment.

“Lieutenant Dobby will be your aide, if you need him, just call out his name.” Harry explained. “Captains Virginia Weasley and Neville Longbottom will also be here to help.” Harry said, motioning to the two remaining friends. They saluted in response.

The five friends and two house elves spent the rest of the afternoon planning training sessions with the elves. Hermione was in her glory, she seemed to enjoy bossing people around, and quickly warmed up to the idea of being Captain in the elf army. “By the way, what is the army called?” Ginny asked Harry. He stared at her.

“Dumbledore’s Army, of course,” Harry answered. They all laughed.

Dinnertime came. The group exited the tower room, and went to the Great Hall. Halfway through a particularly busy corridor, the group finally met up with their least favorite people, Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle.

“Well, if it isn’t Potty and his fan club.” Malfoy drawled. Harry had no desire to talk to him, Harry quickly used one of the spells he had learned in the same book as Occlumency, he transformed into Malfoy’s worst fear. Malfoy screamed and ran from Harry. Crabbe and Goyle ran after him. None of the group had ever seen anyone look so scared.

“What did you do to him?” Ron asked in awe.

“Maybe I’ll teach it to you one day.” Harry said evasively.

“Yeah mate, hopefully before the first quidditch match.” Ron replied jokingly.

When Harry and the group entered the Great Hall, they were greeted with thunderous applause. Harry blushed, and moved to the Gryffindor table.

The weekend came and went. On Sunday, Harry spent the day preparing his lessons, and preparing the elf army. But Monday loomed, tomorrow would be his first class as a Hogwarts teacher. His nerves were catching up to him.

The morning arrived far too quickly for Harry. He felt like he had butterflies in his stomach. This wasn't the start of the regular term; this was, for the first time in Hogwarts history, when a student would also be a teacher. He showered, dressed, and proceeded to go down to breakfast with the other Gryffindors. The hall was full of students discussing their schedules, and commenting on classes. Harry checked his schedule, he had potions and care of magical creatures before lunch and transfiguration and advanced defense against the dark arts after lunch.

"Oh good, we have Hagrid first thing in the morning, I haven't had a chance to talk to him yet." Harry was telling Ron.

"Yeah, and then we have Charlie, this should be interesting." Ron responded.

"Do you guys realize our teachers this morning are both members of the Order?" Hermione asked them both. The look Ron and Harry shared told Hermione they hadn't.

There was a loud whoosh of wings; the morning mail had arrived. Hermione received her copy of the Daily Prophet, Harry had suspended his while he was at Hogwarts, Ron received a letter from his parents, and Harry also received a letter from Ron's parents. Ron's was filled with do's and don'ts for the year, but Harry's was filled with well wishing on his new job.

"First bell," Hermione said, standing to leave for Hagrid's hut. The others followed. As they were walking down to Hagrid's, Hermione was talking about their schedule. "Hey." She began. "I've just noticed something; we don't have any classes with the Slytherins." She was saying.

"Really," Harry asked.

"I wonder why? Not that I'm complaining." Ron said.

"Maybe it's because of Harry." Neville began catching up to them. They looked confused. "If Harry is good enough to teach the defense class, maybe Dumbledore wants to keep the Slytherins safe." Neville explained. They contemplated the information.

“Mornin’,” Hagrid bellowed to the Gryffindor / Hufflepuff class.

“Dis year we have a treat fer ya, Dragons.” Hagrid began. “We got Charlie Weasley teachin’ here, so he brought baby dragons.” The class gasped.

“Really Hagrid, baby dragons,” Hermione asked.

“Yep,” he said. The Hufflepuffs looked really nervous, Harry thought.

“I’ll be needin’ some help, ‘Arry?” Hagrid announced. Harry jumped up, and followed Hagrid into his hut.

“I didn’ need no help, ‘Arry, jus wanted ta talk.” Hagrid began. “Congratulations ‘Arry on becomin’ a teacher, I’m so proud.” He said.

“Thanks Hagrid. How was your summer?” Harry asked.

“Good, good, been teachin’ Grawp all summa. He talks better. Ya should go and see ‘im.” Hagrid recommended.

“Yeah, maybe, we should get outside with the class.” Harry suggested, trying not to think about Grawp.

The rest of the class was quite informative. The students actually learned the proper care of a baby dragon. The term was to be spent caring for the four baby dragons Hagrid had in his care. A schedule had been made to divide the work between them. Harry, Hermione, Ron, and even Neville were excitedly talking about the class, all the way to potions.

“Welcome!” Charlie Weasley exclaimed, as the Gryffindors walked into the classroom. “Judging by those in attendance, I presume this is the sixth year Gryffindor and Ravenclaw class?” Charlie asked.

“Yes professor Weasley.” Hermione responded for the class.

“Excellent. Now, on the board I have written down the ingredients for today’s potions, I’ll be walking around, checking on you progress.” Charlie said, waving his wand at the board.

The class seemed to enjoy their first potions lesson. Charlie gave extensive individual attention to those students who were running into problems. It seemed he was the polar opposite of Professor Snape, Snape would criticize errors, and Charlie would help correct them. Harry had never enjoyed a potions class as much; Charlie was an excellent teacher.

Lunch passed entirely too quickly that day, before he knew it, Harry was on his way to transfiguration.

"Mr. Potter, my office." Professor McGonagall called out to Harry; she always had a way of making Harry feel like he was in trouble.

"Yes professor?" Harry asked, entering into her office, and closing the door.

"The headmaster has just informed me that you have become an animagus, is this true?" She asked sternly.

"The headmaster?" Harry asked. "How exactly would he know?" Harry added.

"I do not know, Mr. Potter, I assumed you told him." She answered.

"I didn't tell him, only Her..." He said as he realized how he found out.

"May I see your animal?" McGonagall asked.

Harry instantly transformed. "Oh, a lion," she said astounded. Harry looked up at her, and then spread his wings. "My word," she exclaimed. Harry changed back. "A griffin, that is unheard of Mr. Potter, when did you accomplish this, and who helped you?" She asked not-so pleasantly.

"I can't answer that professor; Dumbledore does not want me to discuss it." He answered, McGonagall seemed to accept it begrudgingly.

"Very well, Mr. Potter, back to class," she directed him.

“What was that about?” Hermione nervously asked him when he returned to his seat.

“You should know.” He whispered with a bite in his voice.

They spent the first class of the term learning how to transfigure non-magical creatures into magical ones. This required a great deal of magic and concentration. The trick was to transfer some of the witch or wizards magic into the subject.

The class seemed to go a little too fast for Harry, Advanced Defense was next. Harry and the rest of the sixth year Gryffindors and Ravensclaws that were in the Advanced Defense class made their way to the makeshift classroom / training room.

When Harry opened up the room, he was surprised to see it had increased in size three fold. There were no chairs or desks, just plenty of cushions, dark magic detectors, and books. Harry waited as the rest of the former DA club arrived. Harry watched as Ginny entered the classroom. She was flawless, Harry, even after the love affair he had with her in the alternate timeline, could still feel his breath catch in his throat.

“Hey guys.” He called out to the class.

“Hello Professor Potter!” The class called back. Evidently they had this planned.

“Very funny,” Harry began, joining in on their laughter. “I think that this semester we will be focusing on blocking and shield charms. I expect that by the Christmas holiday, you should all be able to either block or shield most curses. After the break, we’ll be working on curses that cause pain. My belief, and Dumbledore agrees, is that if you’re fighting a Death Eater, he’s not going to hit you with the jelly legs curse, he’s going to want to hurt you. Also, since much of what I’ll be teaching may be sensitive, no one is to discuss what happens in this class outside these four walls.” The class nodded their understanding.

“I know you all have put your names on the list for this class, what you may not know is that the parchment is enchanted, anyone who violates our trust will be, known, as someone last year realized.”

Those who knew began to laugh. Harry grew serious. "Voldemort and his Death Eaters have already affected many of our lives, none for the better. What we do here is to combat what he does elsewhere else, so if you think you're not ready to fight, Dumbledore has given permission for you to transfer to Snape's class." Harry looked around as he was speaking. "No one will think the less of you. Many adult witches and wizards are afraid to fight him, so no one will judge you if you leave now." Harry waited to see if anybody left. "One last thing, some of you may think a sixth year student has no business teaching an advanced defense class, if any of you do, please leave now, I am too busy to have to prove myself to any of you. I have already faced Voldemort four times; I'm still here, so I must have done something right." Harry paused for effect.

"Does anyone wish to leave?" He asked the class in general. All the students stood rooted where they stood. "Excellent. Now pair off, the first thing we're going to do is practice the disarming charm from last year, I need to be sure you're all on par with one another." Harry watched as they obeyed his command. "Begin."

Disarming charms were being sent across the room. Some students were obviously better than others. Harry was surprised to see Neville's progress. He had been doing well last term, but now he was relentless. He had partnered with Justin, and had managed to disarm him each and every time.

"Outstanding Captain," Harry said, beaming at Neville.

Harry continued to walk around the room. Twice he stopped by Cho and Ginny, once to correct their technique, the other to flirt with his two pupils.

"Ah, two lovely ladies, battling to impress me," Harry said with a sly smile. They both blushed.

"We're not trying to impress you, Harry." Ginny corrected him.

"Actually Ginny, we are, he's the teacher." Cho pointed out. They both blushed even more.

Halfway through class, Harry heard someone outside the door, trying to unlock it. Harry waved his hand at the door, and unlocked it. The class froze in mid-spells. It was Snape and the Slytherins.

"Ah, Professor Snape, here for some remedial training," Harry mocked.

"Mr. Potter, I'm just here to ensure you're not wasting anybody's time." Snape snapped.

"Well professor, it seems I am; I'm wasting yours and your class' time." Harry taunted.

"A student teaching at Hogwarts, what a waste of classroom space," Snape spat.

"Well then Professor, this sounds like a challenge." Snape got an evil grin at Harry's interpretation.

"Yes Potter that does sound like a good idea. Let's say you and I meet in the Great Hall after class for a friendly duel." Snape suggested.

"Oh, I agree, but let's bring our respective classes, I know mine could use a first hand view of a real duel, and you might need yours for assistance." Harry continued taunting.

"A bit cocky are we Potter, no matter, five o'clock in the Great Hall, agreed?" Snape asked.

"Agreed, rules?" Harry asked back.

"Let's say, all but the unforgivable curses." Snape suggested.

"Agreed." He said.

"Done," Snape agreed with an evil smile on his face. "Let's go." He said to the band of Slytherins that were snickering. They left.

"Let's get back to work." Harry said to the class that was now gazing at him, opened mouthed. Harry kept thinking about the incident with

Snape, he had never spoken to him quite like that, in any timeline. Harry still partly blamed Snape for Sirius' death, "Is this why Snape got the Defense Against the Dark Arts position?" Harry wondered to himself. "Is Dumbledore nervous about the two of us being in the same room together?" Harry didn't have time to ponder this too long. In a very short while, he and Snape were going to duel.

"How do I duel him? All out, show my talents right away? Toy with him? End it immediately?" The questions were raging in Harry's mind. "No, no one can know what I can do. I'll just have a little fun, but I'll also show some abilities they need to learn." Harry finally decided.

"OK, that's it for today. Everyone gets cleaned up, and meet in the Great Hall at five." Harry announced. The class started filing out.

"Are you sure you know what you're doing?" Hermione asked him.

"Yeah, I think I do. The class needs this, some of them probably still agree with Snape. Don't worry Hermione; I won't hurt Snape, much." Harry smirked, Hermione shook her head.

"Are you seriously going to duel Snape?" Harry heard Ginny's voice.

"Why not, he's just another wizard." Harry explained, turning to Ginny.

"He's a very powerful wizard, I've heard." Ginny said sounding worried.

"Are you worried about me, Miss Weasley?" Harry asked playfully.

"Yes." Ginny said, blushing.

"Well, I think I know how to ease your mind." Harry said, walking up to her, and kissing her deeply. She melted into him quickly. Hermione, who had not made it all the way out the door, stood staring, completely bewildered.

"Was this the same Harry who wouldn't even give Ginny the time of day a couple of years ago?" She asked herself. "Wow, he's a good kisser." She said, now rating the look on Ginny's face.

“Feeling better?” Harry asked while breaking the kiss.

“Wow,” was all she could say.

“I’ll take that as a yes.” Harry said kissing her again.

“Harry! It’s almost time to go.” Hermione yelled from the door. Harry just waved his hand in the air, acknowledging her statement.

“I’ll see you after the duel.” He said, squeezing her hand before leaving. Harry smiled at Hermione, as he walked by. “Let’s go.” He said simply.

Harry and Hermione arrived at the Great Hall to find it packed with students and teachers. Apparently word spread fast of the impending duel. Harry even spotted Dumbledore in the room, the headmaster did not look happy. Harry got the distinct impression the headmaster had wanted to avoid this confrontation. It was, however too late.

The Great Hall had been magically enlarged, and stadium seating was added, to give onlookers, a place to sit. Harry wondered if his embarrassing the Defense instructor in front of the whole school was a good thing, then he remembered Sirius. If only Snape had continued to help him with Occlumency, Sirius would be here now. “NO, I will show him, once and for all.” Harry decided.

“I see the school got my message.” A drawling voice came from behind.

“Draco.” Harry said sardonically. “So good of you to invite everyone,” Harry said with a hint of sarcasm.

“You won’t be so happy when Snape embarrasses you.” Malfoy spat back. Harry chuckled and walked away.

Harry walked up to his class as they were congregating around Professor Flitwick.

“Hey guys, why don’t you all sit in the first row, I want you all to have a good view.” Harry said to his class.

“Mr. Potter, a word please,” little Professor Flitwick said. Harry walked off to the side with him.

“I just wanted to say...” He paused; looking to make sure no one was listening. “Kick his arse.” He said quickly. Harry laughed out loud.

“Don’t worry Professor, I will.” Harry retorted with a smile on his face.

Snape walked into the Great Hall, he seemed confident. He walked to the center of the room. Harry did the same. The room quieted. “For this duel, only the unforgivable curses are banned!” Snape bellowed. They saluted to each other.

It happened in an instant, Snape shot multiple spells at Harry. One after the other the spells kept coming, Harry kept moving out of the way, using wandless magic subtly so as not to draw attention, secretly deflecting the spells away from him. When the smoke cleared, Harry was standing, wearing a huge smile. The Slytherins were lying on the stadium seating, the other three houses applauded.

“Now class, what you saw are the blocking charms, notice how it doesn’t absorb the spell like the shield charm...” Harry had to cut his description short; Snape began another barrage of spells. Harry, this time, held up the shield charm, and continued to speak. “It deflects them. And when you get really good, you can direct where they go. Now the shield charm; like I’m using here, absorbs the spells, the problem is when the opponent uses a powerful...” Harry was cut off again by Snape yelling, “Crusio!”

Harry was thrown back, feeling a sudden rush of pain, but just as he had mastered in the other timeline, he threw the pain off easily. The crowd gasped. Harry just stood motionless on his knees, concentrating on keeping the pain at bay. After a long moment, Harry began to rise and walk towards him. Snape wore a look of absolute terror; no one he had ever heard of could tolerate that spell. Harry continued walking towards him, his eyes yellow and wide with anger. Harry considered using the “Totilla Desisa” spell, but he knew it would destroy Snape, and probably the Great Hall.

Harry stood mere centimeters from Snape, the spell still emanating from his wand. “Expelliarmus.” He whispered to Snape. The effect of

the spell was instantaneous, Snape was thrown back and his wand ended up in Harry's hand.

"Well Severus, are you satisfied?" Harry asked with the slight roar of his partially transformed animagus form.

"Quite." Snape said with a smile. Snape shook Harry's hand.

"About time Potter," he announced so that the entire room could hear, then turned to go.

"Oh, and can you revive my students please?" Snape asked amused.

"Yes sir." Harry said with a slight grin.

"Please give Professor Snape a round of applause; he willingly helped me demonstrate the various spells and curses you will be learning. Thank you for coming." Harry left the Great Hall to thunderous applause. He never did revive the Slytherins.

Harry sat in the Gryffindor common room listening to his housemates talking about the duel. Neville sat next to Harry; he did not seem keen on discussing the events with them.

"Harry, are we really going to learn that stuff?" Neville asked sounding excited.

"Yeah mate, I think we should really be prepared." Harry said looking up at him.

"Your parents should be proud of you; you've gone from a forgetful boy to a formidable wizard." Harry said beaming at Neville.

"Really Harry, you really think so?" Neville said almost had tears in his eyes.

"Yes I do, you're picking this stuff up faster than Hermione and with a little more practice, and you could beat any student in the school." Harry explained.

"Any student but you," Neville corrected him.

“Well, I don’t count; I’m also your teacher.” Harry said humorously.

Friday rolled around; Harry’s first week back at Hogwarts was one for the books. Ever since the duel, Snape had been quite civil to him, Harry began to wonder if this Snape was like the one in the other timeline, pushing him to excel. Harry had decided that by the next week, he would try and make peace with his father’s old enemy; Severus Snape.

Harry arrived at the DA room, as it was now called, a few minutes early. The teachers had evidently resigned to allowing him to leave their class early, if it was right before his.

“Dobby,” he called out to the empty room.

“Yes Harry Potter, sir.” Dobby answered, appearing just in front of Harry.

“This weekend we are going to be starting the elf training, I need to know how many elves have agreed.” Harry said, in the commanding tone of an actual military general.

“Sir, Dobby has recruited two hundred and seventeen elves.” Dobby said proudly.

“Two hundred seventeen? I thought there were only a hundred here at Hogwarts?” Harry asked, bewildered.

“There is, Harry Potter sir, but Dobby has recruited elves from other places, many elves want to join the great Harry Potter.” Dobby answered.

“Can you call on them whenever you need to?” Harry needed to know.

“Yes Harry Potter, elves have ways.” He answered cryptically.

“Well done Dobby, let Winky know we will be dining in the tower room tonight.” Dobby bowed and vanished.

Hermione arrived first. “So what are we learning today, professor?” Hermione asked playfully.

"Today, Miss Granger, we will be learning the many uses for the shielding charm." Harry said in his most McGonagall voice.

"Oh, and we will be talking about the house elves." Harry said, giving her a knowing look.

"You want them to know?" She asked.

"Yeah, I want this to be one team; the DA can take on most wizards, dementors and magical creatures. The elves can take on some wizards and most magical creatures. That's a formidable army." Harry explained.

"Is this another one of those pieces of knowledge you can't tell me how you learned?" Hermione asked.

"I think it's time to start." Harry said ignoring her question.

Harry blew his whistle, everyone immediately quieted down. "OK, listen up, today we're going to learn some practical and uncommon uses for the shielding charm, but before we begin, I have something to say." Harry said to his captive audience. "Last weekend our numbers grew by two hundred and seventeen." They all looked around. "We added house elves to Dumbledore's Army." Harry waited for the murmuring to subside. "I know most of you don't even give house elves a second thought. But when you consider they can travel through anti-apparition barriers, can cast their own form of spells, and can work almost in complete secrecy, they are our strongest allies. Starting this weekend, we, that is to say, myself, Ron, Hermione, Neville and Ginny will begin training the elves, I am looking for more volunteers, if you are interested, please see Ron. A friend wrote to me this morning, more and more wizards are joining Voldemort, we have to be prepared." Harry trailed off.

"Anyway, back to today's lesson. Everybody thinks of the shield charm to be a personal protection spell, well it's not. If you all were to cast the shield charm to the same point in space, you would create a shield large enough to protect the whole of Hogwarts. This is critical to our mission because if, or more to the point, when the school is attacked, the DA's can cast the charm, and protect everyone inside." Harry looked around; they were staring at him in awe.

“We can really do that?” Cho asked. “Absolutely, and if you’re really good, the charm could absorb any curse cast by a single wizard, even Voldemort.” Harry smiled at his class’ obvious amazement.

“Any curse? Even the killing curse?” Hermione asked.

“If it’s strong enough, even the killing curse,” Harry explained.

The class was excited; they started to feel like they could actually be of help. “Oh, I almost forgot. I don’t know how many of you know this, but Arthur Weasley is running for Minister of Magic.” The class nodded in unison.

“Well, Arthur tells me, that if he’s elected, and everyone here passes my class, you will all be official Ministry Aurors.” The class’ excitement grew exponentially.

“Really mate, my dad said that?” Ron asked for the whole class.

“Really, now onto the lesson,” he answered. The class, on cue, turned and paired off.

The remainder of the class was spent on learning the shield charm. Harry had heard from Professor Flitwick that the charm isn’t actually taught until the seventh year, and not in any extravagant means.

That night Harry had arranged for Ron, Hermione, Neville and Ginny to meet him in the tower room. He casually walked up alone. He expected to find a nicely decorated table with five place settings. What he found made his jaw drop. The room had been magically enlarged, and had a tremendous table with fifteen places set on either side, and one at either head. “What is all this?” Harry asked the empty room.

“A gift Harry,” Dumbledore’s voice was heard from behind.

“Professor, I don’t understand.” Harry said.

“Well Harry, I’ve been getting stories about how you’re planning to train an entire army. I must admit, when I realized you were not just training your class for defense, I was a little worried. But now I see

the truth of it. You, as do I, expect the Death Eaters to come after the two of us, am I right so far?" Harry nodded. "And since you and I are in the same place, the school itself is in danger, am I still correct?" Harry nodded again. "Well, I just thought, since your army is from different houses, talking to them outside of class could prove difficult, so I arranged for this." He motioned to the room. "You all can eat your meals together in this room. I'm sure Dobby and Winky would be more than happy to arrange it on a daily basis. The unity of Hogwarts is of utmost importance. You, Harry, have taken the biggest leap in bringing that about, you've united three of the four, and I dare say you will all make formidable foes." Dumbledore said with a gleam in his eye.

"Thank you sir, this will be a tremendous help. Professor, I need to ask you. Are we doing the right thing?" Harry asked slightly unsure of himself.

"Yes Harry, I really think you are." Dumbledore answered. Harry nodded.

"I see an extra place setting, are you joining us today?" Harry asked knowingly.

"As a matter of fact I am I thought I could learn a thing or two here." Dumbledore said with a laugh.

"Oh, I only invited Ron, Hermione, Neville and Ginny." Harry said downheartedly.

"Do not worry, Dobby took care of it for you." And with that, the two sat at either end of the long table.

"Wow Harry! How did you ever find this place," began Dean Thomas.

"If Dumbledore knew you were up here, he'd kill you." Dean explained.

"I don't know about that, he might hex me, but I don't think he'd kill me. What do you think, Headmaster?" Harry said turning towards Dumbledore.

"No Harry, I wouldn't kill or hex you, I'd be too worried you might retaliate like you did with Professor Snape." Dumbledore answered, in an amused voice. Harry laughed, and turned back to Dean.

"There you have it; I think he's fine with us up here." Harry said to the now dumbstruck Thomas.

Most of the class had already entered, and heard the conversation; they joined in on the laugh. As soon as they were all in the room, Dumbledore stood. "Welcome, sit everyone." They obliged. "If, after tonight, any of you wish to continue to have your meals in this room, you have my permission. The DA, as you like to call yourselves, require a general common area, I have enlarged this room to act as a dinning and a common area. You must all obey the curfew placed upon your individual year, but you are welcome here the rest of the time. I have long felt that separating the students into houses only hinders the union of our school, so since you all have outgrown your petty differences, I give you the DA common room, enjoy it." Dumbledore finished, sitting back down.

"OK, it's my turn." Harry said, standing from his chair. "Colonel Weasley, how many have signed up to help with the elves?" Harry asked, using Ron's official title in the army.

"Only twenty six, excluding those who are already in the service," Ron said with an air of dignity. Harry thought for a moment.

"Ron, that's everybody." Harry said, counting on his fingers.

"Yes General, that's everybody." Ron answered, making the group laugh out loud. Harry smiled and nodded.

"OK, OK, I get it, all for one I suppose? As the headmaster has informed you, this is our common area. I don't expect you all to forget about your friends, but I would like to see as many of you up here as possible. This is the only place we can meet in private, and discuss important issues." The class agreed. "Then, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the other two officers in the DA. Dobby, Winky, please come out." With a small pop, Harry's two house elves were at his side. "Ladies and gentlemen, this is Dobby, and this is Winky." Harry said, motioning to the elves individually. "If you need

anything, they would be most happy to help. They will be cooking and serving our food, cleaning our common area, and as they have been doing all week, cleaning the classroom.” The group began talking excitedly.

“We have our own house elves?” Ginny asked.

“Actually miss, we is Harry Potter’s house elves, we is working for him.” Winky explained.

“We is honored Harry Potter has given us positions in Dumbledore’s Army, we is officers miss.” Dobby finished for Winky.

“Well then.” Harry interrupted. “I’m sure the headmaster has important business to get back to, so let’s eat.” Harry ended the conversation.

Dinner seemed to taste better in the DA common room. There was certainly something to be said for having your own space. When dinner ended, Harry began talking business again. “Tomorrow we will begin teaching the elves. Since you must have proper levitating skills, I want to work on the elves abilities to levitate things, and turn that into a defensive weapon.” Harry began. “They could easily immobilize any foe by simply placing heavy objects either in their path, or on top of them. This is a rudimentary skill for elves, so it shouldn’t take longer than a week to master.” Harry explained.

“What about the elves inability to harm their master.” Hermione asked concernedly.

“I’ve been thinking about that Captain, the best solution is to partner outside elves with Hogwart’s elves. That way, if an elf runs into his master, the other can still perform his or her task.” Hermione nodded.

“Are we sure there are no spies among these elves?” Ron asked.

“No, unfortunately not, but I don’t think there are. No one suspects the recruitment of house elves, so they wouldn’t have had the opportunity to forewarn them. Dobby only accepted elves that agreed immediately. I think we’re safe.” Harry answered.

“And what if we’re not,” asked Joe Barnes, a second year Ravenclaw.

“Then we’ll just have to put the skills I’m teaching you to good use.” Harry said with a bite in his voice.

“Are they powerful enough?” Ginny asked, giving Harry a seductive look.

“I saw Dobby send Lucius Malfoy flying across the corridor; I think they’ll be powerful enough.” Harry responded, fighting the urge to kiss Ginny.

“And what about the Slytherins, they always seem to interfere?” Neville asked.

“Well, I’m going to burry the hatchet with known Ministry sympathizers.” Harry answered.

“You’re going to do what,” Ron asked angrily. “You’re going to bring in Slytherins?” Ron couldn’t believe his ears.

“Ron, most of the Slytherins are not bad people, we’re just used to dealing with the families of Death Eaters. Most do NOT support Voldemort; they’re against him. We need them; we have to unite Hogwarts if we are to defeat Voldemort once and for all.” Harry answered. Ron squirmed.

“You’re right, Harry. It’s just going to be rough.” Ron added.

Ron could not have been more right, Harry thought. Convincing Slytherins was going to be the hardest thing they would ever do. But Harry knew where to start. Snape, he would know who to approach; he needed to end the family feud.

“I’ll go see Snape on Monday.” Harry announced.

“Snape, why Snape,” Dean Thomas asked.

“Because Dean, if anybody knows which Slytherins to approach, it would be Snape; also, I have personal reasons to see him.” Harry answered.

“What reasons?” Ginny asked. Harry looked at her lovingly; she was so caring, so beautiful.

“To end the family feud that has been going on far too long. Snape is a good man, he just needs good friends.” Harry said, sounding introspective.

Dumbledore stood. “I think I’ll take my leave of you all. Harry seems to have this well in hand.” Dumbledore said bowing to the class.

The unofficial meeting lasted another hour. Questions were thrown back and forth, very little were settled. The Gryffindors and Ravensclaws did not want any Slytherins, and the Hufflepuffs did not care either way.

“I think it’s time to get back to our own common rooms. Tomorrow we’ll meet here at nine o’clock, any questions?” Harry asked the group. “Good, then off we go.” The group rose as one, and exited the room. “This is definitely going to be difficult.” Harry whispered to Ron as they were leaving. Ron just nodded.

Chapter 7

Harry Potter awoke with a start. It was a clear Saturday morning; the sun was starting to peak over the horizon. Harry looked around to see what disturbed his sleep. Dobby, the house elf, was standing at Harry's bedside grinning. "Good morning Harry Potter sir." The elf said pleasantly.

"Dobby, why are you waking me up so early?" Harry said, rising from his four-poster bed.

"You is needing you to start teaching us." Dobby said sheepishly.

"I'll meet you in the DA common room." Harry said shortly. Dobby bowed, and disappeared.

Harry groaned, and began to dress slowly. He walked down to the Gryffindor common room where Hermione was already wide-awake and scribbling notes feverishly. "Hermione," Harry said stifling a yawn. "What are you doing at this hour of the morning?" Harry asked.

"Good morning to you too, Harry." Hermione said sarcastically.

"Sorry, good morning." Harry corrected himself.

"Good morning. I'm writing down ideas for elf training." She finally answered.

"What ever happened to spew?" Harry asked, remembering her attempt at freeing the house elves.

"It's not spew, it's S.P.E.W. And nothing happened to it, I'm just putting it off until after the Voldemort crisis." She responded.

"Hermione, you said Voldemort's name without flinching." Harry pointed out.

"So, there's no reason why not." She snapped back.

"I know that, but up until two seconds ago, I didn't think you did." Harry explained.

"Anyway, why are you up so early?" Hermione asked.

"Dobby, he's apparently excited about training. I told him I'd meet him in the DA common room." Hermione nodded her understanding.

"Good, I'll continue this there." She got up, and followed Harry out towards the DA common room. When they arrived, they were both surprised to find four other members there, Ginny, Cho, Luna, and Neville.

"Hey guys, why are you here so early?" Harry asked them.

"No reason just excited about getting started." Neville answered. Harry and Hermione joined the other four at the dinning table. They were already eating breakfast, and Harry was happy to join them.

Dobby, Winky, and about seven other elves popped into the common room carrying one large box each. "Harry Potter sir, we is having a surprise for you." Dobby said excitedly.

"What is it Dobby?" Harry asked his curiosity peaked.

"We is making you uniforms." Dobby answered, pulling out a finely detailed black robe, with gold stitching, and five gold stars on the shoulders.

"Dobby, this is beautiful." Harry said.

"Wow." Neville added.

"Try it on." Cho piped in. Harry stood, put on the robe, and stared down at himself.

"Now he looks like a general." Ginny said.

"Thank you Dobby, it's wonderful." Harry said sounding thrilled. Dobby beamed.

"We is making one for each." Dobby said to the group at large. The other house elves began passing them out to Neville, Ginny, Luna and Cho. They almost jumped out of their seats, to grab them.

The four captains' uniforms were also black with gold stitching, but their shoulders had two bars on their shoulders, indicating rank. Harry summoned a mirror for the group survey themselves. "Now we're Dumbledore's Army." Ginny said, staring into the mirror. They sat back down at the table; Harry noticed there seemed to be more of a selection at this table, than any of the house tables at the Great Hall.

By the time Harry finished breakfast, the rest of the members arrived. "Good morning all, the house elves decided to honor us with gifts." Harry reached into a box, and pulled out one of its contents. "Uniforms," Harry said. The group looked stunned, especially Ron.

"Uniforms, for us, cool." Ron said flabbergasted.

"Try them on." Harry directed them. Each uniform had a name sewn into the inside of the collar. They were all stunned to find they were a perfect fit. Ron was especially excited about the fact that he outranked everybody in the room, except Harry.

After they had all redressed, Harry motioned for all to sit down. This would be the first official breakfast as a real army. "OK guys, we're going to break up into groups, after I address the elves, I want one of you for every seven or eight elves. Be patient with them, some may be better than others, don't get upset." Harry commanded.

"Harry, you're becoming quite the speech maker, you sure you don't want to run for Minister instead of dad." Ron asked.

"Funny." Harry answered sarcastically. "We are going to be using the DA classroom, so we can all meet there at nine. Any questions," Harry asked. No one answered. "OK, we'll just finish breakfast, and meet in the classroom." Harry said authoritatively.

Harry waited for the rest of the group to leave before apparating to the DA classroom, it was still only eight thirty, but the room was filled with house elves. "Harry Potter sir, we is all here and ready." Dobby said snapping to attention at the arrival of his general. Harry noticed

they were all wearing identical uniforms, identical except for the rank insignias.

"They're wearing clothes?" Harry thought to himself. Dobby must have seen the look on his face.

"They is not wearing clothes their master's gave them." Dobby whispered to him.

"Oh," was all Harry said. Harry realized this was a big step in elf development, they had each made a personal choice to join the army, and they had chosen to wear clothes of their own design.

Harry made up his mind to give his speech now. "May I have your attention please?" Harry said. The elves immediately stopped what they were doing, and positioned themselves into ranks. "You have all made a decision to fight the evil that plagues our world. I am proud of you. This time things will be different, we are organized, we are prepared, we are unified, but most important, and we are strong. We will win, I will see to that." Harry spoke in terms the elves would understand, authority. He knew most, if not all, knew who he was, and they treated him reverently. "I wanted to explain how this training is going to work. Colonel Weasley will oversee your training directly. The captains will work in a group of seven or eight elves, if you have questions, ask your team captain, or Colonel Weasley. Are there any questions?" Harry asked, looking at his watch. The elves didn't answer. "Good, the captains will be here any minute, remain in file until they arrive." Harry said, turning towards his desk.

The group arrived shortly thereafter. Harry hadn't noticed it before, but the room had grown to more than twice its size from the day before. "Brilliant." He thought to himself. Ron took it upon himself to divide the groups. He had placed all but Dobby and Winky in groups of seven, eight or nine. He personally worked with Dobby and Winky. Harry was impressed.

The elves spent the entire morning moving large, heavy objects around the room. Their magic was definitely powerful. The captains seemed patient and instructive; Harry was pleasantly surprised. He had half expected to be involved with every facet of the training, but luckily he wasn't needed. He personally worked on the training

session for the DA class, while only keeping one eye on the elf training.

When lunchtime finally arrived, Harry dismissed the entire group, elves and captains alike, and returned to the DA common room. Lunch at the common room seemed much more enjoyable than lunch in the Great Hall. The conversations were always of a mixed variety, but somehow, they always reverted back to the Slytherins. Evidently the group did not fancy working with the Slytherins.

"I personally don't want them in the group," said Dean Thomas.

"We can't trust them," agreed Semus Finnegan.

"They have never done anything for us." Neville agreed.

"Then why are we including them," asked Padma Patil.

"Because we have to unify," answered Ron. "Don't you remember the sorting hat, if we don't, then we could loose." Ron continued. "And besides, if that's not enough, because Harry said so," Ron finished. The group quickly quieted down. Apparently Harry's opinion carried more weight then the sorting hat's. Harry smiled.

"No." Harry thought to himself. "I'll see Snape today. There is strength in numbers." He had to go now. Lunch at the Great Hall would be over now. "I'll go now." Harry excused himself from the table, and changed out of his uniform and walked outside before apparating down to Snape's office where he knew Snape would be. Harry walked up and knocked on Snape's office door.

"What." Snape's voice came from within. Harry opened the door and entered.

"I was wondering if you had a moment, Professor." Harry asked, not as timidly as he used to.

"What do you want, Potter?" Snape asked in his usual nasty voice.

"I wanted to thank you for all you've done for me. It's because of you pushing me to better myself that I am now a teacher, and I wanted to thank you." Harry explained.

"Well Potter, it seems you're not as stupid as I thought." Snape spat back.

"And I don't know how much you know about the DA, but I was wondering if you know some Slytherins who might benefit from the class?" Harry asked.

"You want Slytherins in your class?" Snape asked, not quite as nasty as he typically did.

"Yes sir, I think many of the Slytherins would be an asset to what we're doing up there." Harry answered.

"Ah, I see, Dumbledore's Army. I told the headmaster placing you in charge of such an important task was lunacy, but perhaps I may have been too quick to judge." It almost sounded like Snape was apologizing to Harry. "I'll talk to a couple of prospects, come see me on Monday." Snape finished. Harry stood.

"Yes sir. And thanks again. And if it means anything, I'm sorry about last year." Harry said, but Snape never answered, he just waved his hand in the air, motioning towards the door. Harry took the hint and left.

"That was, without a doubt, the most pleasant conversation with Snape I have ever had." Harry thought to himself. As soon as he left Snape's office, he apparated back to the DA common room, he expected to find the room empty. It was a sunny September day, and he expected the group to be enjoying it. What he found made him smile; the entire group was still sitting around, clad in their new DA uniforms, discussing teaching techniques with each other.

"Should we salute when you enter?" Ron jokingly asked Harry.

"Keep it up Weasley." Harry joked back.

"Where were you, anyway?" Ron asked seriously.

"I went to see Snape." Harry answered simply.

"Snape, on purpose," Ron asked.

"Yes Ron, on purpose. I went to ask him to recommend some Slytherins for our group." Harry explained.

"And did he agree?" Ron wanted to know.

"Yeah, he did. He's going to ask around, and he'll get back to me on Monday." Harry said.

"Do you honestly think they'll be a help or not?" Ron asked extremely seriously.

"I don't know Ron, I just don't know. But even Dumbledore agrees, so we should try it." Harry answered unsurely.

"Now," he began, lowering his voice so as not to be heard, "did you just apparate?" Ron asked conspiratorially.

Harry froze. He hadn't realized anyone had seen him.

"Yeah, but don't say anything. This is one of the things I'm going to be teaching." Harry answered.

"Really? Cool." Ron always did have a knack for the understatement.

The rest of the day passed quite pleasantly. Harry and the DA class spent the day discussing the direction the DA was going. Some voiced concerns as to who to answer to; Harry believed they should only answer to Dumbledore. "What if dad becomes Minister?" Ron asked.

"If your dad is elected Minister, then Dumbledore will answer to him, and we'll still answer to Dumbledore." Harry explained.

"Good point." Ron conceded.

"What if the public finds out about us, let's face it; a paramilitary organization in Hogwarts could be viewed as a bad thing." Hermione pointed out.

"We know why we're here, if the public at large does not understand, then we'll just have to deal with the ridicule. We cannot risk weakness solely because we're afraid of what other people think." Harry answered.

"Damn right," exclaimed Dean. The others bellowed their agreements.

"Besides, where else can you be a captain of an army at the age of sixteen." Neville added.

"Or eleven," bellowed Stan, a first year Hufflepuff. The class bellowed their agreement again.

"Harry, can I ask something?" Cho asked. "Sure." Harry answered. "What about all the others that want to join now? The entire school saw that demonstration with Snape, many are asking about joining your class." Cho explained.

"I don't know how many more I can accept before the individual attention is affected." Harry answered.

"But Harry, if you gave private instruction on your off time, several of us could become assistants. You teach us, we help to teach the others." Hermione pointed out.

"And then we could triple the class size, and not affect the training." Ginny added.

"Yeah mate, the more the merrier. Let's face it; a hundred fully trained Aurors are better than thirty." Ron piped in.

"I'll tell you what, if, and I do mean if, Dumbledore agrees, I'll discuss it with you all, and get volunteers to help me." Harry ended the discussion.

"One last question Harry, are we expecting the elf army to increase in size?" Hermione asked.

"No, unfortunately too many people know about us now, we would run the risk of spies. No, two hundred seventeen is more than adequate." Harry answered. "Alright, it's almost curfew, let's go off to

our respective houses.” Harry said, standing from the cushy sofa at the far end of the DA common room. Harry waived his hand at one of the walls, and a group of thirty locker-sized cabinets appeared. “Store your robes here; don’t wear them in the corridors.” Harry said. They all stared open mouthed. Harry realized he had just performed wandless magic in front of the rest.

“Oh, it’s just something I can do.” Harry explained, blushing brightly.

They immediately started talking at once. “Can you teach us? When did you learn that? And, What was that?” Were the three most asked questions.

“Alright, alright, listen up,” Harry waited until they all calmed down, “that is known as wandless magic, how and when I learned it I can’t talk about, but if you all want to learn it, I’ll teach it during ADADA.” Harry said, attempting to calm them down. “But don’t say ANYTHING to ANYBODY.” He added.

They all bade each other good night, and retired to their dormitories. Later that evening, at the Gryffindor common room, Hermione and Ron were discussing the day’s events. “Have you noticed how much Harry has changed?” Hermione asked Ron.

“Yeah, but he’s still Harry.” Ron assured her.

“I know, but I’m starting to get nervous. He can do so much that adult wizards can’t. Doesn’t that concern you?” She asked.

“Nah, he’s my best friend; he’s always done the right thing. Nothing he does makes me nervous anymore.” Ron answered emphatically. Hermione knew Ron would never admit his best friend would become a danger to himself or to others. She would have to keep her concerns to herself. She decided to go to bed.

“I’m going to bed Ron; I’ll see you in the morning.” Hermione announced, standing to go. “Good night.” Ron said, leaning back on the large, comfortable sofa. Hermione left.

Harry awoke the next morning to find Ron’s bed empty. “Must have gotten up early,” Harry thought to himself. He showered, dressed,

and went down to the common room. He laughed when he saw Ron asleep on the sofa. He shook his head, and apparated to the DA common room. He sat at the table, ordered his breakfast by speaking to the table, and began to eat.

He finished before anybody else arrived and apparated to Dumbledore's office, and knocked. "Come in." Dumbledore's voice was heard from the other side of the door. Harry entered. "Good morning Harry." Dumbledore greeted him.

"Good morning professor, I was wondering if you had a moment." Harry asked him.

"Of course, do sit down." He answered pleasantly.

"I've been wondering about increasing the size of the class, I'm told quite a few students want to join." Harry said more than asked.

"The Slytherins I presume." Dumbledore stated.

"Well yes, but not just them, the others tell me many more students are asking about joining us." Harry responded.

"I see. Do you think you could handle more students?" The Headmaster asked.

"No, actually I don't, but it has been recommended that I teach a few assistants, and they in turn teach the class at large." Harry answered.

"How many more are we talking about, I'm sure Professor Snape would not be happy if he lost all his students." Dumbledore explained.

"I don't know, but I don't want all his students, just the ones interested in the fight against Voldemort." Harry answered.

There was a long pause while Dumbledore considered his request. "You can have twenty including the Slytherins, no more. You'll have to choose wisely, any more than fifty students will draw too much attention. Also, I want them from different houses, no more than five each." Dumbledore's tone was very stern, not like Harry was used to him talking.

"Yes sir, I understand." Harry said.

"Very well then, let me know their names as soon as they're chosen." Dumbledore said, standing up. Harry stood also. Dumbledore put out his hand for Harry to shake. Harry was temporarily taken aback; Dumbledore was treating him as an equal. Harry shook his hand.

"Thank you, Headmaster." Harry for only the second time, referred to Dumbledore by his proper title.

Harry apparated to the DA common room, he saw Cho sitting alone on one of the soft chairs by the window. Harry walked over to her and sat down opposite her.

"You alright Cho," Harry asked concerned.

"Yes I'm fine. I've just been thinking about... Things," she said.

"Things, as in us things," Harry asked. She looked into his eyes.

"Yes." She answered. "Is there anything wrong?" Harry was now extremely concerned.

"No. Actually I thought you might think something's wrong. We haven't really talked since our date last year." Harry began to understand.

"I'm fine Cho; I don't think we were meant to be." Harry said honestly. Cho smiled.

"Then we're fine?" She asked.

"Yeah Cho, we're fine." Harry answered, embracing her tightly.

"Now here's an interesting site." Harry heard Hermione's voice. He and Cho broke their hug.

"Now tell me Harry", Cho began, ignoring Hermione, "did you just apparate inside Hogwarts?" She asked.

He had done it again, only this time it was someone who realized what an extraordinary thing it was.

“Yes, and before you ask, yes I’m going to teach it.” He added quickly.

“Did I just hear correctly?” Hermione asked.

“Yes you did, and yes, no even the charms around Hogwarts can stop me from apparating, it’s called advance apparition.” Harry explained.

“And did I just hear you’re going to teach it?” Hermione pressed.

“Yes.” Harry answered.

“Good, now did you talk to Dumbledore yet?” Hermione asked Harry.

“Yeah, did you?” Cho added.

“Yes, actually I did.” Harry answered, baiting the other two.

“Well?” Hermione asked impatiently.

“He agreed on twenty more, including the Slytherins.” Harry answered.

“Just twenty,” Cho asked exasperated. “We have twenty just in Ravenclaw.” She added.

“Actually, he wants five from each house.” Harry clarified.

“Five? How are we going to choose only five,” Hermione asked, just as exasperated as Cho.

“Well, the way I see it, I want only those committed to fighting Voldemort, if we’re to have an army, I want them all ready to fight.” Harry answered her in a calm, Dumbledore-like voice.

“Cho,” Hermione turned to her. “I think we’d better get started, I’ll find Ernie McMillan from Hufflepuff and inform him what he has to do.” Hermione said.

“What are we supposed to do?” Cho asked, still not clear.

"We have to feel around who would most likely stand and fight Voldemort and his Death Eaters." Hermione said, then turned to Harry. "Is that right?" Hermione asked Harry.

"Too right," Harry answered.

"So let's go." Cho said, standing to leave.

That night, during the evening meal, Cho, Hermione and Ernie presented their choices for new membership. Harry took the pieces of parchment, read them, and handed them down the table. "I want opinions from the group." Harry explained. The group read each parchment in turn, and handed it to the person next to them. Harry waited until the last person had finished reading them. "Is there anybody opposed to these fifteen students joining our ranks?" Harry asked to the group at large.

"I don't know Harry, Ernie, but two of the Hufflepuffs are not very good at defensive arts, they could be hurt." Ron said.

"Ernie?" Harry asked Ernie.

"Actually, four of them aren't very good, but they are determined." Ernie answered honestly.

"If they are willing to fight, then I don't see why we shouldn't train them, even if we have to spend extra time on each one." Harry explained. "Anybody else," Harry asked again.

"What about the Slytherins," Colin asked.

"That list we'll have tomorrow." Harry answered him. "If there are no objections, Hermione, Cho, Ernie, please inform them they will be joining our class tomorrow. I'll inform Dobby so he can have new uniforms made. Is there any other business?" Harry asked. "No? Good, let's eat." As soon as the words were out of his mouth, the table filled with food. The group dove in.

The next day, just before Transfiguration, Professor McGonagall called to Harry. "Mr. Potter, a word please," she said gesturing to her office. Harry stepped inside, and closed the door behind him.

“Yes Professor?” Harry asked.

“Professor Dumbledore feels you might be ready to take the end of term exams early this year. How do you feel about that?” She asked, eying him closely.

“If the headmaster wants, I’d love to. It would give me more time to work on other things.” Harry answered vaguely.

“Yes Mr. Potter, but do you think you’ll pass?” She pressed on.

“Of course Professor, I shouldn’t have a problem at all.” Harry’s answer took her by surprise.

“Very well Mr. Potter, meet me here after your last class, and we’ll test you.” She said standing and walking towards the door.

Harry walked back to his seat, the class was staring at him, but he said nothing. As soon as the bell rang, Harry walked out of the room quickly, to avoid being questioned about his meeting with McGonagall. As soon as he was out of site, Harry apparated first to the DA common room for his uniform, and then to the classroom, Dobby was waiting for him, carrying a box of uniforms. “Hello Dobby.” Harry greeted him warmly.

“Hello Harry Potter sir. I is having the new uniforms.” Dobby announced proudly.

“Thank you Dobby. Just put them behind my desk.” Harry instructed him. Dobby did as he was told, and popped away.

The new students arrived first since they did not need to stop to put on their uniforms. They appeared very nervous but Harry assumed it was because of what they had seen in the duel. “Welcome.” Harry greeted them as friendly as he could. “Come in, the rest of the class will be here momentarily.” They stepped in, and sat on some of the pillows thrown about the room. They searched around for chairs and desks, wondering how they were going to take notes. Harry had evidently seen their confusion. “This is a hands-on class. We learn by doing.” Harry explained. They seemed to accept this.

Harry decided to take the opportunity to talk to the new arrivals. "I hear that none of you want to sit idly by while a war is being fought against Voldemort." The class gasped when they heard Voldemort's name. "Now how are you going to fight someone, if you can't even say his name?" Harry asked shortly. "This is the Advanced Defensive Arts class; here you WILL learn how to fight VOLDEMORT and his Death Eaters. If you look at my robe," Harry held out his arms, so the students could see his robes better. "This is a uniform; it is a symbol of the war we WILL be fighting soon. Everyone of authority is of the opinion that Voldemort will come at the school; he has to show his followers that he is not afraid of Dumbledore or me. We ALL have to be ready if this happens." Harry paused for effect. "If you decide to remain in this class, you will become part of an army of wizards and magical creatures." Harry said before five hands shot into the air. "Yes?" Harry pointed at a third year Hufflepuff.

"What magical creatures?" She asked.

"House elves," Harry answered simply.

"House elves? What can they do?" She asked incredulously.

"If you really want to know, be here at nine o'clock on Saturday, and you'll find out." Harry snapped at her.

The rest of the class started filing into the room. They were all clad in their uniforms; the new students were looking in awe. A second year Ravenclaw immediately raised his hand. "Do we get uniforms too?" He asked excitedly.

"If you decide to remain, yes," Harry answered.

"Then I'm staying." He announced, followed by the remaining fourteen new students.

"Well than, let's get you changed." Harry said, pulling the box out from behind his desk. The new students immediately rushed up to find their uniforms. Ron laughed at the spectacle.

"Were we that pushy when we got our uniforms?" Ron whispered to Harry.

"I don't think even I was that excited." Harry whispered back.

They spent the entire class getting the newcomers up to speed. All the DA members were helping with the instruction. Harry was amazed at how much effort the class was putting into this endeavor; it made him smile. In neither of the two other timelines had he seen such camaraderie. This time, things would be different; Voldemort and his Death Eaters will be destroyed.

The bell rang, and Harry apparated to McGonagall's office. He had forgotten to change out of his DA uniform. When he entered her office, he was greeted with; "what are you wearing Mr. Potter?" Harry chose his words carefully.

"Um, the DA uniform," Harry had decided to be honest.

"What uniform is this? Does the headmaster know about it?" She asked.

"Um, the headmaster does know, and it's the uniform of my class." Harry answered her, still trying to be honest but vague.

"Hogwart's uniforms not good enough for you, Mr. Potter?" She said with an annoyed tone.

"No ma'am, just keeping the Hogwarts uniforms clean, it can get messy down there." Harry answered.

"Well, let's get started on your exam." She directed him to a table filled with various objects. She began instructing him on what she wanted done. He transfigured inanimate objects to live animals, and back again. He transfigured inanimate objects to different inanimate objects, and animated objects to other animate objects. The entire exam only lasted one half of an hour, but it seemed much longer to Harry. He knew he had done well, because everything had looked like it should. McGonagall informed him the test was over. "Excellent Mr. Potter, you passed." She looked very pleased.

"Thank you Professor. If you don't mind, I have to get down to Professor Snape's office." Harry said, excusing himself.

“Professor Snape?” McGonagall asked wondering why he would be going to see him.

“Yes, I asked him if he knew any Slytherins who could benefit from my class, he said he would tell me today.” Harry answered honestly.

“Very well Mr. Potter, you no longer have to attend my class this year.” She said with a smile.

“Thanks again.” Harry said, before leaving the office and apparating to Snape’s new office.

Harry knocked on the door. “What,” Snape snapped. Harry took that to mean come in, and entered.

“Professor, I was wondering if you had an opportunity to talk to any of the Slytherins.” Harry asked. Snape pulled out a piece of parchment, and handed it to Harry.

“Here, now go.” Snape said in a less than Snape-like way. Harry took the parchment, and left his office.

Harry immediately apparated to the DA common room where he found all forty five members sitting around the now larger dining table, he took his seat at the head of the table. He unrolled the parchment and began to read. Snape had apparently listed ten names on the paper. “We’ll have to choose.” Harry told Ron as he handed him the paper.

“At least Snape didn’t recommend Malfoy, Crabbe or Goyle.” Ron said scanning the list. Hermione snatched the list from Ron.

“I don’t recognize any of these people.” Hermione told them both.

“Neither did I, but I assume that’s because the only Slytherins we know are the ones who wouldn’t show up on the list.” Harry explained.

The list had been passed throughout the table. Everyone had read it once. “Does anyone have a recommendation?” Harry asked the group at large.

"I recommend the Martin brothers." Cho spoke up.

"And I recommend Smyth and Conrad." Ginny added.

"That's four, anybody else?" Harry asked. They all sat thinking.

"I like Cynthia Spinner." Colin answered shyly. Harry looked at him closely.

"Done," those will be the five Slytherins. The two Martins, Smyth, Conrad and Spinner," Harry stated, nodding to Colin as he said the last name.

"Who will have the honor of informing them?" Ron asked the group. No one answered. "I'll have Dobby direct them to the DA class on Wednesday, I'll tell them myself." Harry answered him with a slight hint of disappointment.

The next two days flew by for Harry and the group. Before they knew it, Wednesday had arrived. Harry was walking to the DA classroom, he no longer had Transfiguration, and so he decided to use the time to work on his lesson plan. Passing Snape's classroom, Harry heard a most strange sound. "Mr. Potter, come here please." Snape had said please.

Startled, Harry walked in. "Have a seat Mr. Potter." Harry sat at one of the student desks. "I've heard from five of the students on my list, that they've been asked to attend your class." Harry nodded at Snape's statement. "I have a question, actually I have two. First, why did you only choose five?" Snape waited for a response.

"Dumbledore only allowed me five new students from each house." Harry answered, slightly defensive. "Second, when we dueled, I hit you with the cruciatus curse, but you were not affected. Why?" Snape asked, almost politely.

"I can throw off the cruciatus curse." Harry answered simply.

"I beg your pardon? Did you just say you can throw it off?" Snape did not believe him.

“Yes sir I did and I can.” Harry stared unblinkingly at Snape.

“Interesting,” Snape said introspectively. “Many of the teachers have asked if it was a trick. They wanted to know if we faked it. They’ll be surprised by your answer, as I am.” Snape explained.

“Well sir, if you like, I could teach you, and them.” Harry added quickly. The thought of being alone with Snape was almost terrifying.

Snape considered Harry for a moment. “I’ll ask the staff. You do understand no one can know about it. It would not look favorable to the public if the instructors at Hogwarts were being trained by a student.” Snape explained with a small bite in his voice.

“Of course professor, I would never tell a soul. And, if anyone can accomplish it, there’s a small surprise I can teach that can turn the defense into a powerful offensive spell.” Harry said. Snape was almost taken aback. He leaned forward in his chair, still surveying Harry.

“Really, now I’m most curious.” Snape said. Harry just smiled a sly smile, and rose from his chair.

“Let me know sir.” Harry said turning to go.

“I will Harry.” Snape answered.

Harry froze. “He called me Harry!” Harry said to himself. Eyes wide, he kept walking out the door.

When the five Slytherins arrived at the DA classroom, Harry began to explain the situation. He went through the proposed lesson plan, which the Slytherins were practically jumping up and down about. When Harry got to the part about Dumbledore’s Army, they sat rooted to the floor. Evidently these five, and possibly the five that were not picked, had had either or both of their parents killed by Voldemort, or one of his Death Eaters. There was no love lost in that group. The five began talking openly about what had happened to their parents, and how they would love to see justice done. Harry had got the distinct impression that they wanted revenge, but he would never be able to prove it.

When the rest of the class arrived, they welcomed the newcomers openly. Harry even thought Colin was flirting with Cynthia. "A Gryffindor and a Slytherin, what a pair they'll make," Harry thought to himself.

That night at dinner, the table was full. Harry sat at the head, Ron to his immediate right and Ginny to his immediate left. Twenty-five of the school's most powerful students sat at either side of the table. Harry was in awe at how all four Hogwarts houses were getting along. It was a site to behold, Slytherins flirting with Gryffindors, Ravenclaws laughing with Hufflepuff, and Harry commanding them all. He actually felt like a General.

Harry began to wonder how much alike he and Riddle really were. They were both powerful, they both had followers, and now they both commanded an army. Riddle had the Dementors, and Harry had the house elves. Both sides seemed equally matched, but Harry had one advantage, he was free with his knowledge, and he knew Riddle would never be. Harry's group would get stronger, but Riddle's group would stagnate. "Is it really Dumbledore's army, or is it mine?" Harry wondered

"It's good's army, that's all that matters." Harry heard a voice in his head. Harry had heard that voice many times, but in one of the timelines, he had realized who it was. "Could it be the same here?" Harry wondered.

He was brought back to reality by Ron offering him a butterbeer; Harry smiled and accepted it. "This will be an interesting year." Harry said to his best friend.

Chapter 8

The Ministry election that was scheduled for the 31st of October was approaching rapidly. Harry was spending every weekday in one class or another, every weeknight teaching the Professors that volunteered to be cursed, and every weekend training the elf army. He had no time to relax, no time to be a child. "I'm not a child; I've never been a child." He heard himself saying on more than one occasion.

Halloween, which fell on a Monday this year, meant that the weekend before would be their first Hogsmeade weekend. Harry was looking forward to spending that Saturday with Ginny, on their first date, or at least in this timeline. Harry had noticed over the previous three weeks that this Ginny was slightly different than the Ginny he dated in the other timeline. This Ginny was much more secretive than the other one; she didn't want people knowing they were dating, yet.

Harry awoke late that Saturday morning, it was almost eleven when he rolled out of bed. "All this work's catching up with me." He groaned. Harry apparated to the DA common room, it was empty. Harry dressed in his DA uniform, and went down to see the elves. Someone had obviously announced his impending arrival, because when he opened the door, he was greeted by five hundred elves and fifty witches and wizards standing at attention. Ron was in the front, he waited until Harry was directly in front of him before he spoke.

"General. DA present and awaiting your orders, sir." Ron said in his most army-like voice. Harry showed no emotion; inside he was bursting with laughter.

"As you were, Colonel," Harry answered him, and turned to Dobby.

"Lieutenant Dobby. Have you been recruiting again?" Harry asked him.

"Yes sir, General Harry Potter sir." Dobby answered him. Harry nodded.

"Have the new recruits been briefed?" Harry asked Dobby.

“Yes General Sir, they has.” Dobby answered.

“Very well,” He turned back to Ron. “Carry on with the training.” Harry told him.

“Yes sir.” Ron responded, and proceeded to break up the elves into groups.

Harry sat at his desk. He kept trying to catch Ginny’s eye, but she was too busy with her group. With the arrival of the Slytherins, and the new elves, the groups were even at ten elves per witch or wizard.

The elves were currently training on their form of disarming spells, having mastered the proper uses for the levitating spells. Most were very adept, and those who were not, were receiving personal instruction from Ron or Hermione. Harry noticed Neville’s, Ginny’s, Luna’s and Cho’s groups were learning at a faster rate than the rest. He was pleased.

Ron dismissed the elves shortly before one o’clock. He informed them that the day had to be cut short for school need. Harry chuckled at what Ron considered school need; Hogsmeade. As soon as all the elves and most of the students had left the room, Harry took the opportunity to talk to Ginny.

“Hi Gin, can I talk to you please?” He asked.

“Sure.” She answered a little too enthusiastically.

“What time do you want to meet in Hogsmeade?” Harry asked.

“Well, what do you have planned?” She asked back.

“That’s a surprise.” He said with a sly smile.

“Well, then I would say, the sooner the better.” She said smiling.

“Let’s head on up to the common room, change and head on out.” Harry recommended.

“Don’t you want to eat first?” Ginny asked, fishing for information.

“No, I have a better idea.” Harry answered vaguely.

They walked out together. Harry never noticed the looks he got from Ron, Hermione and Cho, thankfully. When they had changed out of their uniforms, Harry instructed Ginny to leave on the muggle clothes she had on underneath her robes.

“Why?” She asked, still fishing for information.

“No reason.” Harry answered, still being vague. When she finally announced she was ready, Harry stepped right up to her, put his arms around her, and kissed her deeply, she responded immediately.

When Ginny opened her eyes, she was thrown for a loop. Instead of seeing the DA common room, she saw Palm Trees, white sandy beached, and the ocean. Harry had evidently apparated them to a tropical island somewhere in the world.

“Oh my God Harry, where are we?” She asked totally confused.

“Bora Bora,” Harry answered simply. He had taken her to where he had proposed to Cho in one of his other timelines.

“It’s beautiful.” She said looking around the beach.

“I thought you’d like it.” Harry said knowingly.

“But aren’t we going to get into trouble?” She asked concernedly.

“Only if you tell,” Harry said amusingly.

They walked up to the small pub/restaurant that was situated on the beach; they sat at a table facing the water, and began to talk. They talked the day away; Harry was thrilled to see that this Ginny was even easier to talk to than the other Ginny. They talked about the DA, Harry’s childhood, Ginny’s childhood, and the elves. Harry kept expecting the topic of Ginny’s brothers to come up, but luckily it never did.

Harry purchased bathing suits for each of them so as to enjoy the warm Pacific Ocean. When the time came to leave, Harry grabbed

her again, covered her eyes, and apparated. When he removed his hands, Ginny almost fell over; they were at an amusement park and no longer in their bathing suits, they were both wearing the clothes they had started out with. She couldn't tell which amusement park they were at, but she saw roller coasters, people in costumes representing animated characters, and wall-to-wall people. "Where," she started to ask but was cut off by Harry.

"Euro-Disney," Harry answered.

They spent the rest of their evening together riding the rides, and simply enjoying each other's company. When night was upon them, Harry touched Ginny's shoulder, and instantly they were standing back in the DA common room where they started.

"Where have you two been? I don't remember seeing you in the three broomsticks." Hermione said with a smile.

"Oh, here and there," Ginny responded turning and giving Harry a kiss.

"How vague, how about a little more specifics?" Hermione's curiosity was now peaked.

"Sorry Hermione, you're a prefect." Harry answered.

"That's not fair, Ginny's a prefect too." She complained.

"See you later." Harry said, pulling Ginny out the door to walk her back to the Gryffindor common room.

Later that evening in the Gryffindor common room, Ron and Hermione were still sitting around waiting for him. "So, you going to tell us where you've been or not," Hermione began again.

"No." Harry answered sitting down. Harry saw Hermione elbow Ron in the ribs. "Seriously mate, where did you take my little sister today?" Ron asked not as interested as Hermione would have liked.

"Seriously, not in front of the prefects, and considering you're both prefects, not at all." Harry said trying to sound angry and failing.

"Harry James Potter, you tell me right now." Hermione pressed, now sounding angry.

Harry thought for a moment. "Bora Bora," Harry said honestly.

"Harry, enough jokes, where have you been," she asked again. Harry stared at her, and then smiled.

"Hermione, I took Ginny to BORA BORA then to EURO-DISNEY." Harry said, slowly annunciating the syllables.

"You're kidding? Aren't you?" She asked.

"No Hermione, I'm not." Harry answered.

"Wait a minute; you took my little sister to a tropical island? Alone," Ron asked, sounding brotherly.

"Yes." Harry answered sheepishly. Ron was about to say something, but was cut off by Hermione.

"That's so romantic." She said to Harry. "Isn't it Ron?" She said angrily to Ron.

Ron got a worried look on his face. His feelings were too strong for Hermione to upset her now. "Hey, I can't apparate like Harry," Ron said sounding defensive.

"Well, I'm off to bed." Harry announced. He left his two best friends alone.

Harry was asleep the moment his head hit the pillow. The daily stress of all he was doing was starting to take its toll. Harry had no idea how he was going to make it through the rest of the year.

Sunday came and went. Monday dawned with the promise of a new Minister of Magic. There were only three candidates, Arthur Weasley, Carl Cramer from the Improper Use of Magic Department, and Rose Lemon from the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. All three were equally qualified, but luckily Arthur's campaign was the best

funded. According to the Daily Prophet that morning, Arthur was the frontrunner.

Many of the teachers that day would be missing classes to vote in the election. At breakfast that morning, Dumbledore made a shocking announcement. All classes were cancelled. Harry and the DA were in their common room eating, when Dumbledore's voice interrupted their breakfast. The entire school population roared with excitement. It came as such a shock that no one knew what to do with themselves. Harry knew exactly what he wanted to do, spend the evening with the Weasley's. He knew waiting around for the final tally of votes in Hogwarts would be murder; he would just apparate to the Burrow, and stay with them until the outcome was decided.

Ron, Ginny and the rest of the DA used their free time to practice all Harry had been teaching them. Despite the original idea of training a small group, Harry had continued to train the entire class. The class had mastered shielding and blocking techniques, and had started to move onto apparating and simple wandless magic. Harry spent the day with the elves so that no one would go looking for him when he apparated to the Weasley's.

Harry apparated to the kitchen in the Burrow, he heard everyone in the sitting room listening to the wizarding wireless. Harry walked in; he couldn't believe the sight that met his eyes. Sitting around the living room were Arthur, Molly, Bill, Charlie, Fred, George, Peggy, Annie and PERCY. "Percy?" Harry thought to himself. "What is he doing here?" Harry asked himself, but was unable to ponder it for long. Molly noticed Harry walking in.

"Harry dear, what in heavens name are you doing here?" She asked, greeting him in her usual motherly hug.

"I've was here at the start and I HAD to be with you for the outcome." Harry answered simply.

"Does Dumbledore know you're here?" Arthur asked, shaking Harry's hand.

"I'm sure he doesn't." Dumbledore answered, walking in through the front door. "Care to explain yourself Harry?" Dumbledore asked him, not sounding as angry as Harry expected.

"Where's the fun in Advanced Apparition if you can't enjoy its benefits." Harry said jokingly.

"I hope you're not planning on telling anybody you were here, I'd hate to have to suspend my only student teacher." Dumbledore warned in a not so angry way.

"Of course not sir, I just needed to know." Harry answered, truthfully.

"Of all people, Harry is the only one who has a right to be here. All this was made possible because of him." Arthur defended Harry.

"I agree, Minister." Dumbledore said prematurely.

"Well, not Minister, yet." Arthur said jokingly.

Harry noticed Percy stand, and purposefully walk over to him. He stood toe to toe with Harry, extended his hand for Harry to shake.

"No hard feelings?" Percy asked. Harry had a vision of the Percy in one of the other timelines. That Percy was an Auror, and a good man. But even in that timeline, it took a terrible event to change him. Was this Percy changed?

"Sorry Percy, I'm not ready to forget." Harry said shortly. No one said anything. It seemed none of them blamed Harry for not forgiving Percy, not even Molly.

"So," Dumbledore interrupted to break the tension. "How much longer," he asked the crowd at hand.

"The votes will be tallied in a few minutes, we should know in an hour." Arthur answered.

"Then we should all eat something." Molly declared.

They all sat down at the enlarged dinner table to eat. Harry noticed Peggy looking at him strangely. Harry assumed she wanted to talk, so he excused himself, and waited for her in the other room.

"Harry, it's good to see you." She began, giving Harry a sisterly hug. "I need to talk to you. Percy, I don't trust him. He's been asking too many questions about you. I think only Fred and George have seemed to notice. Everyone else is just happy he's home." She explained.

"I don't want to give you the wrong impression about Percy, but I don't trust him either. He's very ambitious; I think he would do anything for a bit of power. But don't worry either; I don't think he'll do anything to the family." Harry answered her concerns.

"Yeah Harry, but he doesn't consider you family." Peggy said.

"Don't worry about me either; nothing he can do can harm me." Harry said, almost pompously.

"If you say so, but I'm still nervous." She said, unsure if Harry was just being cocky.

The conversation came to a quick halt, the wireless was about to declare a winner. Harry called the group back into the sitting room. They all gathered around the wireless.

"And we have the outcome of the election. In third place, with only six percent of the votes; Rose Lemon of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, and in second place with only fifteen percent of the votes; Carl Cramer of the Improper Use of Magic Department. And of course the winner is Arthur Weasley with an astounding seventy nine percent of the votes. Congratulations Minister Weasley".

The room exploded with cheers. Everyone was hugging Arthur and Harry. Harry had never felt so proud of himself. He did this; he did it for the entire wizarding community.

When the celebration ended, Dumbledore gave Harry a look that told him it was time to leave. Harry hugged all the Weasley's goodbye, except Percy, and apparated back to the school.

The day passed swiftly for the DA. Before the class knew it, dinner had crept up on them. "It's almost time for the Halloween feast." Ron exclaimed. "Let's end it here; we'll eat tonight in the Great Hall." He said, turning towards the door. The class cleaned up, and followed Ron out.

Ron went to the room of requirement to get Harry. Ron walked in to find the room empty. "Must have gone already," Ron thought to himself. When he walked back to the DA common room, he saw Harry sitting at the head of the table. "How did I miss him?" Ron wondered. "Harry, you ready for the feast?" Ron asked him pleasantly.

"Where's Ginny?" Harry asked distractedly.

"I don't know, probably at the feast." Ron answered.

Harry looked somberly at him. "Sit down Ron." Harry motioned to the empty chair.

"What's wrong?" Ron asked, now fearing the worst.

"I didn't spend the entire day with the elves, I went to the Burrow." Harry began.

"WHAT!" Ron yelled.

"I'm sorry I didn't take you and Ginny, but I knew everyone would be mad. Dumbledore was definitely mad when I apparated." Harry lied. Ron just stared at Harry. "The election's over." Harry looked for a comment that never came. Ron hung his head; he knew what was coming.

"Your dad won." Harry had never sounded so sad.

"I knew it, we never get a break." Ron said, not realizing what Harry had said.

Harry just waited. "I'll go tell..." Ron cut himself off. "Wait a minute, what did you say?" Ron asked him.

“Oh, I gave you the bad news, your father won.” Harry said, still sounding somber.

“HE WON! Did you say he won?” Ron bellowed.

“Yeah, I knew you’d be upset, all that extra money, having a father as the Minister, all the bad things.” Harry said sarcastically.

“You git, why’d you do that to me,” Ron said, playfully hitting Harry on the back of the head. Harry finally broke into laughter.

“I couldn’t resist.” Harry said during fits of laughter.

“Let’s get down to the feast, Dumbledore’s going to make an announcement, and you don’t want to miss the look on Malfoy’s face.” Harry said, standing to go. Ron followed. Walking down to the Great Hall, Ron kept repeating, “My dad’s the Minister of Magic” over and over again, Harry just laughed.

They arrived at the Great Hall just as Dumbledore stood to address the school. “I have an announcement to make.” He said, as the Hall quieted immediately. “As you all very well know, today there was an election for Minister of Magic, I have the outcome.” He paused for effect. You could almost hear a pin drop. Heads were turning to Ron and Ginny. Ron just smiled and waved back. “The new Minister of Magic will be” he paused again, “Arthur Weasley.” The Hall erupted with cheers and applause; evidently they were rooting for Mr. Weasley.

Ron completely ignored all the congratulations he was receiving, and concentrated his attention at the Slytherin table. Not even the members of the DA dared to applaud. Ron understood, but truly enjoyed the daggers Malfoy was looking towards him. Ginny stood, walked up to Ron and embraced him as only a sister could. What surprised them all was when she did the same to Harry. Most everyone knew Harry had funded the campaign, but they did not know Harry and Ginny were dating and to see the once shy Ginny, walk up to him in front of the whole school and hug him was almost unbelievable.

The feast was without a doubt, the best one they had ever had in Hogwarts. The thought of Arthur Weasley, member of the Order of the Phoenix, Minister of Magic, made everyone who knew, ecstatic.

Harry had a sudden feeling of dread, he couldn't explain it, but knew something wasn't right. "Voldemort's happy." He thought to himself. "He's happy," He said aloud.

"Of course he's happy, his father just became Minister." Hermione said in a condescending tone. Harry looked at her with concern in his eyes, she understood immediately.

"Oh, you don't mean Ron, do you?" She asked him. He just shook his head. "Voldemort," she whispered. Harry nodded.

"Something's not right, why would he be happy that Arthur was elected Minister?" He asked, not really expecting an answer.

Harry put the whole idea out of his mind. He enjoyed the feast with the rest of the school. Back at the Gryffindor common room, mayhem broke out. It was without a doubt the loudest party ever held there. Ron and Ginny were beaming, everyone else was as happy as can be, even Harry.

When the party came to a close at about three in the morning, Harry dragged himself up to bed. On his pillow he found a chocolate frog with a note that simply said "thanks", Harry ate the frog, and went to bed.

Ron awoke the next morning feeling better than he had in years. He saw Harry still sleeping and left him there. He dressed and went to the DA common room for breakfast. The entire DA members were there talking excitedly about the election. Ron jumped right in.

When they all sat for breakfast, Hermione noticed neither Harry nor Ginny were present. "Ron, where's Harry?" She asked him.

"He's still sleeping, I left him in bed." Ron answered with a piece of bacon sticking out of his mouth.

"Where's Ginny?" She asked.

“I don’t know, probably sleeping too.” Ron answered unconcernedly.

“No she’s not, I checked.” Hermione declared.

“She’s probably eating in the Great Hall; she has other friends you know.” Ron said, matter-of-factly.

“You’re probably right.” Hermione answered, not entirely sure.

When their first class started, History of Magic, Hermione noticed Harry wasn’t there either. “Ron, should we check on Harry?” She whispered.

“Nah, he’s probably just doing something for the DA.” Ron whispered back.

Class ended, and the Gryffindors went on to Astronomy. Again Harry was absent. Hermione was starting to get worried. Harry had not missed a class he was scheduled for all year.

On their way to lunch, Ron and Hermione were joined by Colin. “Dumbledore wants to see you, Hermione, Harry and Ginny in his office.” He told Ron. Ron looked nervous.

“Professor Dumbledore wants to see us? Why?” He asked Colin.

“He didn’t say.” Colin said shortly.

“Go get Harry and Ginny, we’ll go to his office.” Hermione told Colin.

They walked up to the Gargoyle, gave the password, and climbed the stairs to Dumbledore’s office. They were about to knock when Ron heard a familiar voice.

“That’s dad’s voice.” He said to Hermione. Ron quickly knocked.

“Come in.” They heard Dumbledore say pleasantly.

They walked into Dumbledore’s office. The paintings of the old Headmasters were awake and listening intently. Ron and Hermione looked around the room. Dumbledore was talking to Arthur and Molly.

Molly stood and embraced each new arrival in a motherly hug. Arthur did as well.

"Where's Ginny and Harry?" Molly asked pleasantly.

"Colin went to get them." Ron answered.

They sat down and listened to the three adults talk excitedly. Apparently Arthur had many ideas for the Ministry, and Dumbledore agreed with all of them. Shortly into their conversation, there was a desperate knock on the door.

Dumbledore stood to answer it personally. It was Colin. "Professor, Harry, he doesn't wake up." Colin exclaimed.

"Have you informed Madam Pomfrey?" Dumbledore asked calmly.

"He's in the infirmary now." Colin answered.

Molly had a shocked look on her face; she stood with the other three, and proceeded out towards the infirmary. When they arrived, Harry was lying on a bed at the far side of the room. They strode cautiously to him.

"How is he?" Molly asked Pomfrey nervously.

"He's been put under a spell. I found a piece of chocolate on his pajamas that contained a very powerful sleep potion." She turned to look into Molly's eyes. "There's nothing I can do." She said somberly.

Molly immediately began to cry. Someone had purposely incapacitated Harry for unknown reasons. "Why?" Molly asked aloud.

"Is he in any danger?" Dumbledore asked Pomfrey.

"No, the potion will just keep him asleep." She answered.

"Do you know for how long?" Dumbledore asked.

"Judging by the concentration, I'd say about a month." Madam Pomfrey said.

They all looked shocked. "A month," Ron bellowed.

"Yes Mr. Weasley, a month." She repeated.

At that moment Colin walked in and whispered something to Dumbledore. The Headmaster got a worried look on his face. No one had ever seen him look so old.

"Arthur? Molly? Can you come with me please?" He asked them. They followed him out the door and down the corridor. Hermione looked at Colin.

"What was that about?" She asked Colin.

Colin looked nervously at Ron, and then turned to Hermione. "Ginny is missing." He said somberly.

"WHAT?" Ron screamed.

"Since when," Hermione asked.

"According to her roommates, she received a note from someone to meet her after everyone went to bed. She left the Gryffindor common room about four this morning." Colin explained.

"I'll kill him." Ron said aloud.

"Who," Colin asked.

"Malfoy," Ron said with a bark in his voice.

"Now Ron, we don't know he had anything to do with this." Hermione said, not really believing it herself.

"Actually, he's missing too." Colin added.

Ron's head snapped up. Everyone knew in an instant what Ron had planned; he would kill Malfoy. Madam Pomfrey, who had heard everything, walked over to Ron and handed him a goblet.

"Here drink this; it will clear your mind." She said calmly. Ron obliged. The effect was instantaneous, Ron collapsed into a deep sleep.

“Don’t worry; he’ll be fine. But we can’t have students running around trying to kill each other.” She said plainly, picking Ron up and placing him on the bed next to Harry.

Hermione walked over to Harry and placed her hand in his. “Everything will be all right.” She whispered in his ear.

Shortly before dinner, Dumbledore, Arthur and Molly appeared in the infirmary. Molly had the look of someone who just couldn’t cry any more. Arthur and Molly sat next to Ron and Harry and said nothing.

“There was a break out in Azkaban last night.” Dumbledore started, as Hermione, Neville and Colin looked up at him. “Several Aurors were killed.” He paused. “Twenty seven known Death Eaters escaped, including Lucius Malfoy and the Death Eaters you all help capture.” They all looked dumbstruck. He continued. “A note was received this afternoon describing what had happened in Azkaban, and what happened here with Harry and Miss Weasley.”

“What did happen?” Dumbledore was cut off by Hermione.

“Last night Harry was poisoned to ensure he could not prevent Miss Weasley’s abduction. Miss Weasley was abducted by three students in your year.”

“Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle,” Neville interrupted.

“Yes Mr. Longbottom, you are correct. They have taken her to Lord Voldemort to be used as a bargaining tool against the Minister. It seems Voldemort did not interfere in the election to allow a family man to be elected. Now he can control the Minister of Magic.” Dumbledore explained.

Hermione had a look of utmost terror. One of her best friends was just kidnapped by Voldemort himself. There was nothing they could do.

Ron began to stir. Molly leaned into him, and kissed his forehead. Ron awoke. “Mum?” He asked groggily.

“It’s all right dear, mum’s here.” She said in a hoarse voice.

Ron regained his senses. He sat bolt upright, and looked around the room. The look on everybody's faces confirmed that what he had previously heard was not a nightmare. "What's going on?" He demanded of all in the room.

Hermione sat next to him, and began explaining all that had transpired. Ron listened intently, never even attempting to interrupt. When Hermione was finished, he began to stand. He had the look of someone with a purpose, this was war.

"Hermione, assemble the DA in the classroom. Neville, get the elves. Colin, gather all the ghosts you can. I want everybody in that room in fifteen minutes." He ordered. Hermione, Neville and Colin all stood, and exited the room without a word. Ron turned to his parents.

"Don't worry, she'll be fine." He said, and then turned to Dumbledore. "This is what we've been training for." He said to him.

"Indeed." Was all Dumbledore said, and stepped aside as Ron walked out.

"What was that about?" Molly asked Dumbledore, but it was Arthur who answered.

"Molly dear, there are a group of students in the school who have been training under Harry, training for war." Molly got a horrified look on her face. Arthur continued. "They have been learning advanced defensive and offensive spells designed to combat Voldemort and his Death Eaters. Oh, and they've also been training house elves to fight." Arthur added.

"They're just children." Molly said simply.

"No Molly, they're wizards." Dumbledore began. "Harry knows more magic than anybody I know, myself included. He has taught them more magic in the last few months, than most wizards learn in a lifetime. Harry has even been teaching the Professors as well." Dumbledore said.

"The professors," Molly asked shocked.

"It seems Harry is the only wizard who has mastered a defense against the cruciatus curse, so naturally, all the teachers are interested." Dumbledore explained.

Ron assembled the entire DA membership in the classroom with the addition of Sir Nicholas, the Bloody Baron, the Fat Friar, and Peeves. They were all lined up when he entered. He quickly went to the front of the class, and began barking out instructions.

Peeves was attempting to drop a bucket of water onto the group of Slytherins when Ron raised his hand and Peeves froze in place. "You WILL stop what you're doing and you WILL do as I say." Ron growled at Peeves.

They all, including the ghosts stared at Ron in disbelief.

"As you should all know by now", Ron began, ignoring the stares he was receiving, "my sister Ginny has been taken hostage by Voldemort." There was a gasp from those who did not know. "We will find her, and bring her back safe! None of you will rest until that happens." They all nodded their agreement, even Peeves. "Elves," the elves snapped to attention. "I want you to talk to your entire kind, find out where my sister is. Leave no stone unturned. Do you understand?" Ron asked.

"Yes sir, Colonel Wheezy, sir." Dobby answered for the elves.

"Go then, find her!" They vanished with a pop. "Hermione, Voldemort probably has anti-tracking spells on Ginny, so search the library, find some obscure tracking spell that Voldemort wouldn't have thought of." He said to Hermione.

"Yes sir." Hermione said, turning towards the door.

"Slytherins, ask around your house, find out exactly who did this, I want them, they will pay." He said to the five Slytherins present. They nodded, and quickly left the classroom.

"Ghosts, I want you to travel to the homes of known Death Eaters. Visit Malfoy, Knott, Crabbe, Goyle and Avery. I want my sister found." Ron ordered.

“That’s my job.” The Bloody Baron announced, before exiting through the wall.

“Neville, I’m placing you in charge of teaching the class, Harry left his lesson plan in his desk. I want you to learn all the spells he was planning on teaching us this year, and then teach the rest.” He nodded. “This is war!” Ron said, turning to leave.

When Ron left the classroom, Neville went into Harry’s desk, and removed his lesson plan. All the other students were listening as he started barking out requests for various texts found on the bookshelves.

They all pulled together.

Ron went back to the hospital wing. He found his mother sitting next to Harry. Evidently his father was out with Dumbledore. He walked slowly up to his mother, and put a comforting hand on her shoulder.

“We’ll get her back mum, I promise.” Ron said. His mother looked at him lovingly.

“I’m so proud of you. The way you just took control of the situation shows a maturity not even I expected. You’re a good son, and brother. I just hope you’re right.” She said sadly.

“No one, not even Voldemort, will ever take another person from the Weasley family again, that is my promise to you.” Ron said. His mother looked at him again, there was a fire in his eyes she, nor anyone else had ever seen.

Madam Pomfrey reentered the hospital wing from her office. She was carrying a bowl of water and a wet rag. She handed it to Molly, who began wiping Harry’s forehead absentmindedly. Ron turned to Pomfrey.

“Do everything you can for him. If anybody can bring Ginny back, it’s Harry. Nobody loves her the way he does.” He told the nurse.

“What did you say, Ron?” His mother asked.

“Harry and Ginny are dating, more than that; I think they’re in love.”
Ron told his mother, who began crying again.

“She must be so happy.” Molly said through her tears.

Ron left his mother, who was starting to talk to Harry. He went up to the library to help Hermione, or at least, to feel useful.

Chapter 9

Harry was sitting on the beach in Bora Bora. He was reading a book entitled "How to Find Your Lost Love". There was a warm breeze, plenty of sun, and no one in sight. He kept trying to read the same chapter over and over again, but he just couldn't retain the information. The chapter was called; "Where is Ginny Now".

Harry heard a noise from behind a tree and stood to investigate. "I'm never going to finish this damn book anyway." He said to himself as he threw the book into the ocean. He walked over to the subject tree, but there was nothing there but a shadow. But it was not the shadow of the tree; it was the shadow of a man, an old man.

"That's funny, must be an old tree." He said amusingly.

"I'm not a tree," said the shadow. "I'm a man, don't you see me?" It asked.

"No, I only see the tree." He said to the shadow.

"Concentrate Harry, you know who I am." The shadow said.

"No, I don't want to concentrate; I want to sit on the beach." Harry argued with the shadow.

"Now Harry, you know you can't stay here forever." The shadow said.

"I'm tired. I'm tired of Voldemort wanting to kill me. I'm tired of everyone thinking I'm special. I'm tired of teaching. I'm just tired." Harry said, sitting on the sand.

"You are special Harry." A familiar voice came from behind him.

"Oh come on Sirius, I'm just Harry." He said to his late godfather.

"I'm sorry Harry; you are special. I know it wasn't your choice to be special, it wasn't your choice to be marked as Voldemort's equal, and it wasn't your choice to be poisoned. But you will overcome." Sirius said, sitting next to Harry.

"I've missed you Sirius. Why did you have to die?" Harry asked childishly.

"Things just happen Harry, you know that. I would love to be fighting next to you when Voldemort comes, but I can't, no one can." Sirius said sadly.

"Look at me Harry. Sirius is dead, he can't help you." The shadow said.

Harry looked to see a tall elderly wizard, Harry knew in an instant who he was. He had seen him before in the other timeline. It was Godric Gryffindor.

"Why do you say that Godric; he can't help me?" Harry asked, turning back to find Sirius gone.

"No Harry, alas he can't help you. Not even I can help you. Only you can help yourself." Godric said.

"I don't want to help myself; I want to sit on the beach." Harry argued.

"Harry, Ginny has been taken prisoner by Voldemort, you have to help her." Godric said sadly.

"Ginny? I was just reading a book about her." Harry explained slightly confused.

"Yes Harry, you're hearing the people in the hospital wing. You already know she's missing. What was the title of the chapter you were reading?" Godric asked.

"I don't remember something about finding Ginny. I love Ginny." Harry declared.

"I know Harry; you do love her. And it's that love that will free you of the spell you're under. You have to go find her; you have to go rescue her." Godric said.

"Do you know I'm your descendant?" Harry asked Godric.

“Yes Harry, I know, but I didn’t think you knew.” Godric answered.

“Yeah, I found out in another timeline. You saved me.” Harry said.

“And you must save Ginny.” Godric said annoyed.

“Ginny? Where’s Ginny, save her from what?” Harry asked, still confused.

“Listen Harry; Ginny is in danger! You have to help her!” Godric yelled, making Harry focus on what Godric was saying.

“How long have I been here?” Harry asked.

“Too long, now snap out of it!” Godric yelled.

“What do I have to do?” He asked, starting to regain his senses.

“Concentrate on waking up. Concentrate on what you plan to do, save Ginny. Decide to wake from this enchanted sleep. Do it now!” Godric scream faded as Harry was being pulled from his dream.

Harry opened his eyes; he was in the hospital wing of Hogwarts. He knew this just by the smell. He reached onto the table next to his bed, and found his glasses. He quickly put them on, and surveyed the room.

No one was there but him. He didn’t need the noises coming from Pomfrey’s office to know instantly that she was there. He found his robes on the bed next to his, and quickly dressed. He walked purposefully to Pomfrey’s office and the door opened of its own accord.

“Potter, you’re awake!” She exclaimed.

“How long have I been out?” He asked quickly.

“Two weeks.” Pomfrey answered.

“Two weeks? Ginny!” He yelled, running out of the infirmary. While he was running, he held out both hands, and one silvery phoenix shot out of each hand and went in different directions.

Ron was in the DA classroom with Hermione. They were sitting discussing what she had discovered in the library where she had been spending every waking hour for fourteen days.

Ron looked up in time to see one silvery phoenix enter Hermione and the other enter him and disappear. "Harry's awake!" He exclaimed.

"And he wants me to get Moaning Myrtle." Hermione said.

"Then go." Ron instructed, as he left for the DA common room where Harry was now waiting.

"Harry!" He yelled, as he embraced his best friend. When he pulled away, Ron saw Harry's eyes; they were yellow. A deep fiery yellow, Ron was almost scared. "Harry? Are you all right?" He asked apprehensively.

"Ginny." Harry growled. "HE TOOK GINNY!" Harry roared with the voice of a lion causing all of Hogwarts to rumble. Ron could not believe it; Harry was scarier than Voldemort.

A moment later, Hermione arrived with Myrtle. "Myrtle," Harry continued growling. "I need you to help me." He said in his griffin voice. Myrtle never looked so frightened.

"Yes Harry?" She asked nervously.

"I am going to release a silver phoenix from my hand, follow it to where it goes, then come back and tell me where it went. Do not get caught, fly invisible. I know you can do it." Harry growled angrily.

Myrtle could not refuse. She actually feared Harry's wrath. "Of course Harry." Myrtle said.

Harry raised his right hand, and a silver phoenix shot out, Myrtle immediately followed it through the wall. Harry sat at the head of the table. "Bring me the DA members." He growled to Hermione.

She was fixed on Harry's yellow eyes. "NOW," Harry barked causing the school to rumble again. She did not need telling again, she turned immediately and ran out the door.

Ron sat at his right side, but did not dare to speak. This was not the kind and gentle Harry, this was a fully qualified wizard who wanted revenge, and was likely to get it. Neither said anything.

By the time Hermione returned with the group, Harry's eyes had still not returned to their normal green. She was still fixated on his eyes. Harry waited for them to sit until he spoke.

"Myrtle should be back with the location where Ginny is being held in a few minutes. As soon as she does, I will take Ron with me, and bring her back." He growled.

"We want to help too." Hermione interrupted, finally raising the nerve to speak directly to Harry.

"No, it would be dangerous to go with more than two people." Harry lied. "You're all to stay here and await Ron and Ginny's return." Harry explained.

"Aren't you coming back?" Hermione asked nervously.

"Eventually, but Ginny will need medical attention." He said, turning to Colin he added. "Hand me your shoe." Harry said to him. If Colin thought this was an odd request, he didn't show it.

Colin immediately removed his shoe, and handed it to Harry. Harry waived his hand over the shoe, and then handed it to Ron.

"This shoe is now a port key, it will only activate when both you and Ginny are touching it. It will bring you straight back to this room. Understand?" Harry asked.

"Yeah mate. I guess you're going to apparate back?" Ron verified.

Harry just stared at Ron without speaking.

"Immediately after you rescue Ginny?" Hermione asked for clarification.

Harry turned to look at her, he knew he could never really lie to her, she would know. "No. I have unfinished business with these people," was all Harry could say.

Hermione looked like she was about to argue but was interrupted by the arrival of Moaning Myrtle. Myrtle flew right up to Harry, and whispered in his ear. The others just watched. Harry nodded only once, thanked Myrtle, and then turned to Ron.

"Now." He said simply, standing from the table. Ron followed his lead. They both looked at Hermione, who had tears in her eyes. "Go find Molly and Arthur, I'm sure they're still on the grounds, bring them here. They'll want to be here when Ginny arrives." Harry ordered her.

He touched Ron's arm, and they vanished.

Ginny was sitting in what appeared to be a dungeon cell. There were no windows, stonewalls, and a heavy wooden door. She was sitting on the stone floor crying, as she had been doing those last two weeks. She appeared fatigued and starved, and her cloths were torn and tattered. There were dark lines under her eyes, and here face was pale and gaunt. She heard a noise outside the door, and snapped her head up. "Was this the day she died?" She asked herself.

The door crept open, the three who walked in amazed Ginny, it was Vincent Crabbe, Gregory Goyle, and, Draco Malfoy. She stopped crying immediately, she didn't want them to know.

"Ginny listen." Malfoy began hurriedly. "We didn't know. Crabbe's father wrote to him to do this, we thought they were just going to keep you prisoner, but now they're talking about killing you." He told her.

"Then what are you going to do?" She asked as calmly as she could.

"Do? We can't do anything, we're just kids. There are six grown wizards here including my father, we wouldn't stand a chance against them." He answered.

"Then you're no better than they are." Ginny snapped.

"Listen, I've always done what my father expected of me, somehow I never thought I'd ever have to become a Death Eater, I always thought Dumbledore would stop HIM. But now it's too late, tomorrow the Dark Lord will hold a ceremony inducting us as his followers. We don't want to." The other two grunted their agreement. "We have no choice." He conceded.

"Dumbledore once told you, we would have to choose between what was right and what was easy. Be sure you choose correctly Draco, Vincent, Gregory, this may be your only chance to save yourselves." Ginny told them, remembering Dumbledore's speech.

The three looked at her like they had never seen her before. "How Ginny, how can we help?" Malfoy asked defeated.

Just as he was speaking, a silver phoenix shot into Ginny, Malfoy almost shrieked. "What was that?" He asked astounded.

"That Draco was the answer to your question. Harry's coming." She said with an evil grin.

"He can't. We gave him a potion that will make him sleep for a month, there is no remedy." Draco explained.

"Oh I can assure you he's coming, and none of them will survive." Ginny said with an evil tone no one had ever heard from her. "Choose wisely boys, for when Harry arrives, only those on Voldemort's side will suffer." She said turning to face the stone wall, signifying the conversation was over."

The three stepped out into the hallway. "I don't want to be a Death Eater." Crabbe told Malfoy.

"Neither do I," agreed Goyle.

"Well do you think I do? But what can we do? Look who I'm asking." Draco snapped.

"Help Harry when he comes." Crabbe speculated.

“And how are we going to do that?” Draco asked exasperatedly. The other two just shrugged.

They didn’t have a chance to finish the conversation, Avery and Knott walked purposely passed them, and opened Ginny’s cell. “Come with us, girl,” barked Avery. She followed them passed Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle; they all had pleading looks on their faces.

When they arrived at their destination, Ginny noticed six men, one with a silver hand. The man she knew as Lucius Malfoy spoke first. “Ah, Miss Weasley, my how you’ve grown since your second year.” Malfoy began. “As much as it pains me, I cannot be here for your demise, but since your father refuses to help the Dark Lord, we have to come up with a new plan. To that end, I must be leaving, Draco, Vincent, Gregory, are you all ready?” He asked proudly.

The three looked at each other, and then back to Draco. “We’re not going.” Draco said, drawing himself up to full height.

“Excuse me? Did you say you were not going?” He asked menacingly.

“Yes father, I don’t want to follow the Dark Lord like you did.” Draco said defiantly.

“Well Wormtail, what do you think about this?” Malfoy asked the silver handed wizard.

“I think four people will be dieing today.” Wormtail answered in his squeaky voice.

“I agree.” Malfoy said, using the binding spell on his son, Crabbe and Goyle. “The Dark Lord is calling for me, I must leave. Wormtail, make their deaths painful.” Malfoy said as he apparated away.

“I think.” Wormtail began. “We should play first.” He turned to Ginny. “Crusio,” he bellowed, pointing his wand at her. The spell never hit her; instead it just floated a meter in front of her.

Suddenly they all knew why, Harry Potter was standing in front of her, but the spell had no effect on him.

“PETTIGREW,” he growled in his most griffin voice making the entire building shake. They all froze. “Take her now.” Harry said to Ron who was hiding behind Ginny. Ron grabbed Ginny’s hand, but she pulled away.

“Draco, Vincent and Gregory, help them!” She yelled as Ron forced her hand onto the port key. Harry turned back to Wormtail.

“So Peter, we meet again. Only this time you can’t leave. I’ve cast anti-apparition, and anti-transfiguration spells on this room, it’s just you and me.” Harry told him.

“What about us,” Avery yelled, shooting a spell towards Harry. Harry just held out his hand, palm out, and stopped it. Harry turned to Avery and Knott who were standing side by side. All at once, the four men, not counting Wormtail, grabbed their throats; they were choking. They fell to their knees, and shortly there after, died.

Harry turned back to Pettigrew. “Peter, it’s just you and me.” Harry repeated menacingly.

“Ha..., Harry, I’ve wanted to thank you for saving my life.” Pettigrew cried.

Harry laughed, an evil roaring laugh that caused the building to shake again. He stared at Peter, without even a word, Peter pointed his own wand at his own head, and yelled; “Crusio”. Peter fell writhing in pain, then it stopped.

“How does it feel Peter? I spared your life because I thought that’s what my father would have wanted. Now you die.” Harry said calmly as Peter began to grab his throat, and fell to his knees. “Good bye Peter.” Harry said as Peter died.

Harry turned his attention to Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle, who were still bound. Harry waved his hand, and the ropes vanished. “Where do your loyalties lie?” Harry growled at them.

Malfoy thought for a moment, but surprisingly it was Goyle who answered first. “Dumbledore,” he said with conviction. Crabbe grunted his agreement.

“We don’t want to be Death Eaters, Harry.” Draco used Harry’s first name.

Harry turned from them, levitated Peter’s body, and walked over to the three Slytherins. He touched Peter, and waved his hand towards the other three, instantaneously Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle were in the DA common room with the remaining members of the DA, but Harry was not.

Ron attempted to leap over the table to grab Malfoy. “I’ll kill you!” He screamed. But Dumbledore just held him in place, with a strength no one knew he could muster.

“Mr. Weasley, you have heard your sister’s testimony, they are not truly at fault.” Dumbledore said calmly. “Where is Harry?” He asked Draco calmly.

“I don’t know, he just sent us here.” Malfoy said confused.

“Yes well, Harry has a gift, he could be anywhere at this point.” Dumbledore said.

Dumbledore lead the Weasley’s, Hermione, Malfoy, Goyle and Crabbe to his office for a more detailed account of the events of that day. He made chairs appear for them all to sit on, and turned to the group.

“Now Ron and Miss Granger have given us the account of what happened since Harry awoke, Miss Weasley has given us the account of what happened while she was captive, now all we need is the account of what happened after Miss Weasley left.” Dumbledore nodded towards Malfoy.

“Yes sir.” Malfoy began. “I’m sure Ginny told you about us getting bound.” He said hopefully to Dumbledore.

“Yes, she was very clear it wasn’t your fault.” Dumbledore said slightly impatient.

“Well, as soon as Ginny left, Harry turned to the one they called Wormtail.” Mr. and Mrs. Weasley gasped at Wormtail’s name. “He

told him it was just the two of them, but when Avery shot a spell at him, Harry just put up his hand and blocked it. Then the four couldn't breathe, they just died." Malfoy looked to Crabbe and Goyle who were not affected by the loss of their fathers. "Then he turned back to Wormtail, and made him choke, he died too. Then he released us, took Wormtail's body, waved his hand at us, and we appeared here." Malfoy explained.

"I see. Arthur?" Dumbledore said to the Minister. "Contact your office, I have a feeling a dead body has just arrived, which should clear Sirius' name; post mortem." Arthur stood, and went to Dumbledore's fireplace. "Now the question remains, where's Harry?" Dumbledore asked to no one in particular.

"I'll go check his room." Ron declared, and ran from Dumbledore's office.

"Mr. Malfoy, do you know where you were?" Dumbledore asked Draco.

"No sir, we used a port key, and they never let us out of their site." Malfoy explained.

"Miss Granger, I think you should order a meeting of the DA, we will need to start patrolling the halls of Hogwarts with more vigilance." Dumbledore said to her. She rose, and left immediately.

Arthur came back and sat on one of the chairs next to Ginny. "You were right Albus; Harry was there with Pettigrew's body. The Prophet is there right now taking pictures." Arthur said.

"And Harry," Dumbledore asked.

Arthur nodded. "Harry left immediately after, that was almost an hour ago." Arthur explained.

"Curious." Dumbledore said.

Ron burst into the office. "He's gone!" Ron yelled breathlessly, handing Dumbledore a note.

He read it aloud.

Ron,

I have become what I despise most, a murderer. I cannot continue to stay at Hogwarts being what I am. Sirius left me a lot of money and property; I'll be fine. Tell Dumbledore thanks for everything. Tell Ginny how much I love her, and I'll miss her. Take command of the DA, I left my lesson plan in my desk; you shouldn't have any problem following it. Go easy on Malfoy; I'm sure it's been tough for him all these years living with a Death Eater who wanted nothing more than to turn his son into him. Tell your parents I love them like my own, I'll miss them too. You and Hermione have been my best friends since first year; you made my life worth living. I love you all.

Harry

Dumbledore sat rooted to his chair speechless. Molly and Ginny were crying hysterically. Ron was just staring into space. Even Draco had a somber expression.

"I'll dispatch Aurors immediately, we'll find him." Arthur announced.

"Arthur, I don't think if Harry does not want to be found, that the Aurors, or anybody else would be able to locate him." Dumbledore said.

"Well we have to do something. Harry has to be found, and I know Tonks would be most desperate to find him. Let them try." Molly piped in.

"Molly, I'm not saying we shouldn't try, what I am saying is if Harry chooses to disappear, looking would be an exercise in futility." Dumbledore clarified.

"I want to help look." Ron spoke up.

"Now son, you have to continue your studies." Arthur said to Ron.

"That's my best friend! I will not let him roam around alone!" Ron exclaimed.

"Let the Aurors do their job. They'll find him." Arthur told his son.

Hermione burst in. "Is it true?" She asked the stunned crowd. No one spoke.

Hermione realized it was true, and began to cry. No one spoke for almost thirty minutes. The thought of losing the only person who could kill Voldemort was almost as bad as the thought of losing a good friend.

"Arthur, dispatch your Aurors, inform them if they do find Harry, not to approach him, I think that is a task for Ron, Hermione and Ginny, Harry will only listen to them. Students, get back to your common rooms, if there is any news, we will tell you immediately." Dumbledore said standing.

All in the room did as they were told. Molly just sat silently weeping over Harry leaving.

"No one is to discuss the events of today outside those present here, is that understood?" He said to the students. They all nodded their understanding. "Ron, if you would remain behind a moment." Dumbledore said to Ron, and waited for the rest to leave. "You and Miss Granger do have permission to discuss this with the DA, but make sure you inform them that outside of the confines of the DA common and classroom, nothing is to be said." Dumbledore told him.

"Yes sir." Ron said, turning to leave.

The following week was spent in quiet contemplation. Everyone had heard that Harry quit school, but only the staff, the DA, Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle knew why. The Gryffindors made a decision to not play quidditch this year out of respect for Harry, it was Ron's idea. Interestingly enough, it was Malfoy who convinced the Slytherins not to play either. The remaining two houses chose not to play because of the lack of competition. This year there would be no quidditch, and it wasn't the school's choice.

Ron continued to instruct the DA class with the help of Hermione, Luna, Ginny and Neville. The elves were a little disorganized because

of Dobby and Winky's disappearance the night Harry left. They all speculated that they followed their master.

Hogwarts wasn't the same; even the teachers seemed a little less focused. Hagrid was down right boring with the dragon instructions; his heart just wasn't into teaching.

"Any news," Hermione asked Ron during breakfast on the morning of the 21st of November.

"None, they don't know where to look. They just keep checking the same places over and over." Ron answered disgustedly.

"What about Hedwig, has anybody seen her?" Hermione pressed.

"No. And no one can send a message by owl; the birds just keep coming back." Ron answered.

"What about the request for new members?" Ginny asked timidly, she knew Ron's opinion already.

"I don't trust Malfoy! I don't care how he's been this past week. I don't want him here!" Ron exclaimed for the fourth time that week.

"Ron, he has changed. He deserves a second chance." Hermione agreed with Ginny.

"He kidnapped my sister!" Ron bellowed. "Has everyone forgotten that?" Ron said standing from the table, and going to sit on one of the sofas.

Neville walked over to Ron, and sat at his side. "We must unite the houses Ron. You must unite them. For the first time we can convince the Slytherins to join us, to join the fight. Please think about it." Neville said, standing to leave for the first class.

Ron stared out into space. Neville was right, only by burying the hatchet between him and Malfoy, could Hogwarts ever truly be united. "I wish Harry was here." He said to himself.

Harry was walking down a dirt road leading up to a large house with a white picket fence. He smiled at the sight. He hadn't smiled in a week.

"Our new home," he said to the small elves that were walking behind him.

They walked up to the door, Harry waved his hand at it, and it opened. When they walked in, it became evident that it had been magically enlarged on the inside. The outside indicated a spacious home, but the inside was practically palatial.

The elves immediately popped away, and Harry sat on one of the covered chairs. This was one of the Black family retreats on the shores of Scotland. Harry knew no one would ever find him here. The house, which contained twelve bedrooms, fifteen bathrooms, a library, ball room, great room, and gallery, was decorated in warm and inviting colors, not what Harry was used to from the Blacks.

Harry immediately noticed the paintings on the walls were of the muggle variety, their depictions didn't move. He decided to remove them all the same.

He spent the first week in his new house decorating it to his fashion. He had commissioned several muggle paintings, which depicted his friends, parents, the Weasleys, and his favorite, Hogwarts.

He hung the Hogwarts painting in the library, which quickly became his favorite room. The Blacks had many spell books Harry had never seen, and was eager to read them.

He quickly fell into a routine of working around the house, practicing advanced magic, and reading everything he could get his hands on.

The house was situated near a muggle village, so Harry had no problem walking in and out of the village without anybody recognizing him. The day before he arrived, he had gone to Gringotts to withdraw a large sum of money, and he converted it to muggle money so that he would not need to return to Diagon Alley for a long time.

The villagers accepted Harry quickly, since he was polite, respectful, and most importantly, rich. He enjoyed their company very much, and found himself at the local pub as often as he could.

He awoke the morning of the 10th of December, the air was cold, and there was a light frost on the grass. Harry had made up his mind to purchase Christmas presents for his friends and family, and would send Hedwig to deliver them.

He dressed quickly that morning, and proceeded to walk the now familiar dirt road to the village. "I have to buy a car." He told himself. When he arrived in town, he began to look at all the stores for the Christmas gifts.

Nothing seemed to say what he wanted. He wanted his friends and family to know how much he loved them. "I could give the girls jewelry, but what about the guys?" He wondered.

He walked into the local jeweler, and began looking around. He found a very nice diamond necklace for Hermione and several pairs of ruby earrings for Molly, Peggy and Annie, but Ginny was much harder to buy for.

"Are you finding everything all right Mr. Black?" The jeweler asked.

"Almost, I'd like that diamond necklace, and three pairs of those ruby earrings gift wrapped please, but I still need one more piece." Harry said.

"And for whom are you purchasing?" The jeweler asked politely.

"A very special girl," Harry answered.

"Well, I have an exquisite ring here." The jeweler said, pointing to a very expensive diamond and ruby ring.

Harry stared at the ring. He knew the rubies would go nicely with Ginny's red hair, but it did look a little like an engagement ring.

"It's not an engagement ring, is it?" Harry asked nervously.

“Not really sir, though you could certainly use it as one. Do you know her ring size?” He asked Harry.

“No, actually I don’t.” Harry said.

“That won’t be a problem, if it doesn’t fit, any local jeweler can resize it.” He said pulling it out of its case, and handing it to Harry.

Harry stared at the ring closely. “I’ll take it.” He finally said.

“Excellent Mr. Black, you have exquisite taste.” He said, taking the ring and the other purchases into the back for wrapping.

Harry paid for the gifts, it was a considerable amount, but Harry didn’t mind, he had withdrawn enough muggle money to purchase diamonds several times a year.

“A car,” he decided, pulling his coat tighter around his body.

There was only one car dealer in the village, he sold various types of autos, and including the one Harry was interested in, the BMW. Harry walked straight up to the 7 series BMW that was in the showroom window. He knew he would have to magically create a driver’s license, but he didn’t care.

“Can I help you Mr. Black?” The dealer asked.

It had become evident to Harry, that his financial state was the talk of the town. “I’d like this one. Do you have one in black?” Harry asked pointing to the 735i on the showroom floor.

“As a matter of fact, we do.” He answered, directing Harry to the back warehouse.

Harry immediately fell in love. It was the car of his dreams, or at least his dreams before becoming a Hogwarts student. Harry informed the dealer that he would return with the cash, which made the dealers eyes grow to twice their size, and take the vehicle today.

That night Harry had only half his money left, but he did manage to buy gifts for all his friends and family, and a car for himself. “Well

Harry, you're a muggle again. No more magic unless you can't help it. You are Harrison Black, sole heir to the Black family fortune. Harry Potter is dead." He said to his reflection. The mirror did not answer back.

Harry went to bed that night, secure in the knowledge that he was a muggle; he would never have to face Voldemort or any of his Death Eaters again.

Chapter 10

Ron awoke Christmas Eve morning to an empty room at the Burrow. He almost expected to find Harry sleeping in the camp bed across the room. He dressed slowly and went down to breakfast.

When he entered the kitchen, he saw Hermione, Ginny and Peggy sitting around a pile of gifts. "Gifts a day early?" Ron asked.

"They're from Harry." Ginny said downheartedly.

"How did they arrive?" Ron asked.

"Hedwig, two trips," Hermione answered.

"Did you get her to take a note to Harry?" Ron asked excitedly.

"She wouldn't wait, she just flew away." Ginny said through tears.

"Oh." Ron said sadly, sitting at the table.

After a few minutes, Ron reached over to grab his gift. "Ron!" Hermione and Ginny yelled together.

"What?" He asked. "They're ours." He said.

"Their Christmas presents." Ginny answered indignantly.

"So," Ron said angrily, picking up his gift. He opened the gift to find a solid gold griffin ring, with two rubies for eyes. Written in an arc shape around the top of the griffin was the words "DUMBLEDORE'S ARMY" and across the bottom the word "GENERAL". Ron had tears in his eyes.

"What is it?" Hermione asked, grabbing the box from Ron. She began crying immediately. Ginny followed in turn.

"Open yours Ginny." Peggy instructed.

Ginny grabbed her gift and began to open it slowly. She caught her breath when she opened the box. Tears immediately began to fall, and she stood from the table and ran to her room crying.

Hermione and Peggy looked at each other, and ran after her. Ron just shook his head. "Girls," he said to the empty room.

Ron went outside to de-gnome the yard, the cold weather kept the gnomes hidden in warm dry places around the yard. He spent the entire morning working.

When he returned to the kitchen for lunch, Hermione, Peggy, Annie and his mother were gathered around the kitchen table trying to calm Ginny down.

"Mum, what's for lunch, I'm starving." Ron announced.

"Make your own lunch." His mother snapped in a hoarse voice that told Ron she had been crying.

"Not you too, it couldn't have been that bad a gift." Ron declared.

"Ron, you can be such an insufferable git sometimes." Hermione said, thrusting Ginny's gift box into his hand.

When Ron opened the box, he almost fell over. He opened his mouth twice, but neither time did any words come out. "Is this what I think it is?" Ron asked the group.

"We don't know Ron, that's the problem." Hermione explained.

Ron softened. He walked slowly up to Ginny, and hugged her. "It's all right Gin, he'll be back." He said while Ginny cried on his shoulder. "Gin, what do you think it is?" Ron asked his sister lovingly.

She pulled away slowly, and stared into his eyes. "I think he's trying to tell me something." She said slowly.

"Yes Ginny, I think he's trying to tell you he loves you." Ron said in a small voice.

Ginny began crying softly again. Hermione began to cry as well, but for a totally different reason.

"Sometimes Ron, you amaze me." Hermione said, hugging Ron, and proceeding to kiss him deeply on the mouth. Everyone stared in amazement. When Hermione realized what she was doing, she quickly pulled away, blushed crimson, and ran upstairs. The other girls laughed.

"What do you think mum, repressed feelings?" Peggy asked her mother.

"I think so, dear." She answered, standing and moving to prepare Ron's lunch.

Ginny sat staring at the ring, after a few moments, she resolved to put the ring on. She chose the ring finger of her left hand, as if it was surely an engagement ring. While her mother was serving Ron, Molly noticed on which finger Ginny decided to wear the ring.

"Ginny!" Her mother exclaimed. "What finger are you wearing that ring on?" Molly asked.

"The finger it belongs on." Her daughter said defiantly.

"Ginny dear, that's where you wear an engagement ring," Annie said condescendingly.

"So what, if I want to wear it on that finger; then that's where I'll wear it. It is a gift from the person who saved my life, twice! And the same person who reunited you with your missing daughters! And the same person who helped your sons realize their dream! And the same person who got dad elected Minister! I don't think me proudly displaying this gift on the finger it was meant to be worn on, should be any problem for you!" Ginny exclaimed, and stormed out of the kitchen.

Molly stood there, open-mouthed. "Mum, Ginny's right, she may only be fifteen years old, but we all know what that ring signifies, and a better fiancé you could never hope for." Annie said.

"She's my baby." Molly said.

"We know mum, but she's also in love with Harry, and unless we're very much mistaken, Harry's very much in love with her." Peggy explained.

"I should go apologize." Molly declared. She turned and left the kitchen.

Hermione entered as Molly was leaving. "What's with Ginny?" She asked Annie and Peggy.

"She put the ring on." Peggy said simply.

"So?" Hermione said.

"She put the ring on the index finger of her left hand." Peggy clarified.

"Oh." Hermione said knowingly. "Molly must have been very upset." Hermione speculated.

"Not as upset as Ginny, when mum questioned her." Annie explained.

That night at Christmas Eve dinner, Arthur was surveying the ring Ginny received. "It's lovely." He said to her.

"And probably expensive," George added.

"But dad, it's an engagement ring." Charlie said to his father, still trying to get his point across from earlier in the day.

"Perhaps, but could you possibly think of a better fiancé than Harry Potter," his father asked.

"That's what I said." Annie added.

"And besides, did he ask her to marry him?" Arthur asked the group. They all shook their heads.

"Then it's only speculation. And to be honest, I've always thought of Harry as another Weasley, this would just make it more official." Arthur said with a smile.

“Still no word on his location, Arthur?” Molly asked, changing the subject.

“None, Molly dear, he’s just vanished. We can’t even track his magic; he doesn’t use a wand. He’s a smart one, he is.” Arthur answered.

“So, what did Harry get the rest of you?” Arthur asked pleasantly.

They all began showing him their gifts; Arthur sat amazed as to how much money Harry must have spent on them. Besides the earrings for Molly, Peggy and Annie, the necklace for Hermione, he purchased rings with phoenixes for Bill, Charlie, Fred and George.

“Open yours dad.” Peggy said.

“All right, let’s see.” He said, opening the wrapping. “Oh my,” was all Arthur could say. He had received a solid gold, jewel encrusted wand, with the inscription; “MINISTER OF MAGIC”.

He passed the wand around the table; everyone stared at the wand in awe. “This is too much. How much did the Blacks leave him?” Arthur asked no one in particular.

“Actually dad, my connections in the Diagon Alley branch of Gringotts tell me the fortune was huge. More money than he could spend in three lifetimes, not to mention the business holdings.” Bill answered.

“I’d rather have Harry back.” Ginny said almost in a whisper. Her mother hugged her.

“I know dear, I know.” She consoled her.

“Wait, there’s something else in this box.” Arthur said, pulling out a small wooden box. The inscription on the box read; Tap three times with wand, and say name. “Curious.” Arthur said, pulling his wand out and tapping it three times, then saying his name.

Instantly the box opened, and a three-dimensional image of Harry raised itself out of the box.

“Hello Arthur, since I wanted you to hear this message first, I placed it in with your gift. I hope everyone enjoyed their presents; I tried to be as personal as possible. I wanted to tell you all how much you’ve meant to me. I always thought of Sirius as a father figure, until I realized he was more like a big brother. You’re the only father I’ve ever known. You’ve treated me like a son from the day I met you. I needed you to know this, that and one other thing. Sometime this past summer I fell in love with Ginny, she means everything to me. When I found out she was kidnapped, my desire to help her broke the spell I was under, which allowed me to do what was necessary. Unfortunately I went too far. I killed those men; they’re life ended because of me. I’m finding it hard to live with myself; I shouldn’t have done that. But they tried to harm the girl I love, I couldn’t ever let them have another opportunity, and they won’t, no one will. The ring she wears will instantly inform me if she is in mortal peril, I will instantly be at her side. No one will ever harm a member of my family again! Please understand Arthur, I love your family as if it was my own, well, maybe not Percy, but the rest mean everything to me, my very presence with them places them in danger, and as much as I’ll miss you all, I can’t allow that to happen. Perhaps one day Voldemort and his Death Eaters will be dead, and I can come back, don’t try and look for me, you’ll never find me. One last thing, if Voldemort is ever destroyed, I would like to take your daughter’s hand in marriage. I know you think we’re young, but I guarantee I know exactly how Ginny will turn out, I want to spend the rest of my life with her, but, until then, the ring she wears is just a gift and not an engagement ring, I will not ask her until I receive your permission. One last thing, this box is enchanted to give a different message to each member of your family, except Percy, just have them follow the instructions as you did. Take care of yourself.” Harry’s image disappeared.

When Arthur looked up, all the females were crying hysterically, and Ron, Fred, George, Charlie and Bill had tears forming in their eyes. “I have no words.” Arthur said sadly.

“I never knew how he felt.” Ron said.

“We’re his only family.” Hermione said.

Ginny look at her father expectantly. "Yes Ginny, he has my permission." Arthur said before Ginny even asked the question. They were all caught off guard when the box glowed green for a moment, then stopped.

"That was strange." Arthur said.

"No it wasn't, Ginny's message has changed." Hermione said.

"What do you mean dear?" Molly asked her.

"Didn't you notice the timing; right after Arthur gave his permission? I think he enchanted the box to play a different message for Ginny the moment Arthur gave his consent." Hermione explained.

Ginny's eyes grew wide. She stood, took the box from her father, and ran upstairs to her room. No one followed her, they all thought of the same thing; give her privacy.

Ginny ran into her room, and slammed the door. She pulled out her wand, tapped the box three times, and said her name. Harry appeared once again.

"Hello Ginny. If you're hearing this message, your father has given me his blessing to marry you when Voldemort's finally destroyed." The Harry image went down on one knee. "Virginia Weasley, will you marry me?" The image asked. Ginny couldn't help but answer.

"Yes." She said through tears.

"Then why don't you kiss me?" She heard a voice from behind her.

"Harry!" She screamed, turning towards him, and kissing him deeply.

"I love you Ginny, I will always love you." He said, holding her tight.

"Why did you go? I can't stand to be without you." She said, placing her head on his chest.

"I didn't think you'd agree to marry a murderer." Harry said, ignoring Ginny's question.

"You're not a murderer, not even Crabbe and Goyle think that." Ginny said.

"No, but I do, and that's all that matters, I did not kill those men to save you, Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle, or even myself, I killed them because they touched you, because they wanted to harm you. I could just as easily left without anybody being hurt, but I didn't, I killed them." Harry explained.

Ginny got a stern look in her eyes. "Good. They deserved to die. They have run around killing innocent people, young and old alike, I don't care what you think Harry Potter, but I don't think you're a murderer, and that's all that matters to me." She said breathlessly.

"I've got to remember not to upset you in the future." Harry said jokingly.

"Remember that. Now, let's go down and see the family." She commanded.

"No Virginia, this is how it's going to be, I will see you on occasions, just like you, I can't live without you, no one can know we meet. If someone finds out, your life could be in danger, and I could never forgive myself if something happened to you." Ginny tried to interrupt, but Harry cut her off. "No. You are the one I love, if, or should I say when, everyone finds out, you could be harmed again. So I will not talk to anybody other than you, you will not tell ANYBODY we meet, or I'll stop coming. Do you understand?" Harry asked with a hint of anger.

"No I don't, but I'll do as you ask. No one will find out from me. I love you Harry, and if a few stolen moments is all we're going to get, so be it. But I tell you this, the visits better be worth my while." Ginny said with a sly grin.

"Oh, I guarantee you'll be pleased." Harry answered with his own sly grin.

They hugged and kissed for another hour until Hermione knocked on the door.

“Ginny, are you ok?” She asked through the door.

“Go Harry; come back soon. I love you.” Ginny whispered to Harry. He left.

Ginny strode over to the door, and unlocked it. “I’m fine Hermione.” She said casually.

Hermione entered. “Was I right?” Hermione asked.

“He asked me to marry him.” Ginny said plainly.

“And, did you accept?” Hermione asked expectantly.

“Actually, yes, as soon as Voldemort’s gone, we’ll get married.” Ginny answered.

“I’m so happy for you.” Hermione cried, giving Ginny a huge hug.

“Thanks. Let’s go down stairs.” Ginny said.

They rejoined the party. They all wanted to know if the image of Harry had asked Ginny to marry him. She said yes, over and over again.

Christmas morning found Harry packing his car for the long drive to the neighboring town. Harry had heard that was where the nearest orphanage was, so he resolved to buy presents for all the children, and play Santa Claus.

Harry was told there were only twenty children living there, thirteen girls and seven boys. He made sure to buy two gifts for each child. Every available space in his BMW was filled with gifts.

He left his house shortly before six in the morning, and arrived shortly after nine. Harry, though an orphan also, had never seen the inside of an orphanage. He was amazed at how the children seemed so happy, happier than Harry ever remembered being at the Dursley’s.

The headmistress at the orphanage, St. Jude’s, greeted Harry at the door. He had previously been in touch with her about possibly

financing an expansion. She certainly did not miss the opportunity to show Harry why the orphanage needed to expand.

Harry was directed to the main common area, where all the children sat playing with their old, worn out toys and games. Harry saddened at the sight.

When the headmistress ordered attention, the children responded quickly and orderly. "We have a special guest today children, his name is Mr. Black." She told the children.

"Good morning Mr. Black." They greeted in unison. Harry laughed in spite of himself.

"Mr. Black has a wonderful surprise for you all; gifts," she yelled. The children began to yell and cheer.

Harry proceeded to hand out all the gifts to the children; they were especially happy when they received two each. One girl tried to come up for a third, but luckily Harry had recognized her.

The gift giving lasted almost two hours, Harry had looked into one of the bags, and noticed two gifts wrapped in pink paper still inside.

"Headmistress, is there a child missing?" He asked confused, wondering if he had just over purchased.

"I don't think... Oh, Cindy isn't here." She noticed.

"Cindy?" Harry asked.

"Yes, none of the other children play with her. It's sad really. Strange things seem to happen around her, and the children get scared. Bad luck I guess." She explained.

"What kind of strange things?" Harry asked, knowing what the answer would be.

"Oh, it's nothing. One time, one of the boys said he broke her doll, but when we checked, it was fine. Another time a girl said they were playing hair cut, and cut off all her hair, but when we checked, her

hair was just like the day before. I think it's just the kids playing jokes on her, nothing else." She said dismissively.

"Can I see her; I'd like to give her these gifts." Harry asked.

"Of course, Mr. Black, she's probably upstairs, just follow me." She beckoned.

Harry followed her up to the girl's dormitory; there were fourteen beds all in two rows of seven. At the far end of the long room, a little blond haired girl of about 4 or 5 sat playing with her doll. She had fiery red hair and green eyes. "She could almost be a Weasley." Harry joked to himself.

"Cindy, this is Mr. Black, he has something for you." The headmistress said to her.

"What does he have?" Cindy asked in a small voice.

"I have presents." Harry jumped in, pulling out the two gifts and handing them to her.

She wasted no time; she tore the wrappings off both gifts, and opened the boxes to reveal a stuffed lion and a small purse.

"Thank you." She said quietly.

"May I talk with her, Headmistress?" Harry asked politely.

"Certainly Mr. Black," she said, turning to leave.

Harry sat on her bed. "Why aren't you downstairs with all the other girls and boys?" Harry asked.

"They don't like me. They think I'm different." Cindy said in her small voice.

"Why do they think that?" Harry asked.

"One time a girl cut off all my hair and it grew back." She answered.

"Anything else," Harry asked curiously.

“One time a dog was chasing me in the yard, and then I was in my room. I don’t know how that happened.” She answered honestly.

“Well, do you know what I think?” Harry asked her.

“No.” She said in a sing song voice.

“I think you’re special.” Harry said.

“Really,” she asked, hearing it for the first time.

“Yeah, I think you’re very special.” Harry clarified.

“Thank you.” She said sheepishly.

“Can I come back later and talk to you some more?” Harry asked politely.

“Ok.” She said.

Harry walked to the Headmistress’ office. When he was asked to enter, Harry immediately began asking her questions.

“How did you get Cindy?” He started.

“She was actually left on our doorstep, we don’t know who her parents were, or even her last name, we named her Cindy.” She explained.

“How long has she been here?” Harry continued.

“Almost four years, she was only an infant.” The headmistress said.

“Has anyone ever tried to adopt her?” Harry asked.

“Yes, several couples took her home, but they always brought her back, they all say the same thing, she’s too much trouble. I never understood that, she’s an angel here.” She said.

“Last question, can I adopt her?” Harry asked confidently.

"I don't know we've never had a single man ever ask to adopt one of our children." She said shocked.

"I can obviously provide a healthy home." Harry explained.

"I'm sure you could Mr. Black, especially after that sizable donation you offered the orphanage, but you're so... young." She said.

"I'm sure my age would be of no importance, if you would just ask your superiors. Not to mention, I'm quite sure none of your recent applicants could provide for her the same way I could." Harry defended himself.

"Actually Mr. Black, my superiors have nothing to do with it, they always side with whatever my recommendation is. May I ask you, why Cindy?" She asked kindly.

"In truth, I'm an orphan, I was raised by my maternal Aunt and Uncle, I was forced to live in a house with people and always be alone, just like Cindy. People always made fun of me, for one reason or another, just like Cindy. I was special, and nobody noticed, just like Cindy." Harry responded honestly. "We're kindred spirits." He added.

The Headmistress surveyed Harry for a moment, and then smiled. "You have my blessing. If you would like, just fill out these papers." She handed him a large stack of papers. "And I'll recommend you to the board." She said.

"When do you think I could get a response?" Harry asked impatiently.

"Well, today is obviously Christmas, tomorrow is Boxing Day, how about the day after tomorrow, too soon?" She asked jokingly.

"No Headmistress that would be perfect. It would give me time to buy the necessary furniture, and redecorate one of the spare bedrooms." Harry said happily.

"Spare bedrooms? How many do you have?" She asked him.

“Well, there are thirteen total bedrooms, I occupy one, and my two servants occupy one each, so there are ten spare bedrooms.” Harry explained.

“Ten? Servants, I had no idea.” She announced with a smile. “About that donation, Mr. Black,” she pressed.

“Yes Headmistress, I think double the amount we discussed would be appropriate, do you agree?” Harry asked knowingly.

“Splendid Mr. Black, absolutely splendid,” she exclaimed.

“I think I’ll bring the money by in two days, when I come to pick Cindy up.” Harry said, hinting they would only receive the money if he WAS picking Cindy up.

“I understand Mr. Black. Perfectly clear,” she said knowingly.

Harry drove home in the best mood he had ever felt. He was soon going to give a child the one thing he never had, a happy home.

The next two days found Harry rushing around the village buying various toys, stuffed animals, and furniture to make Cindy’s arrival a pleasant one. He had not spent as much money as he expected, but was sizable nonetheless. He took the opportunity to open a bank account, and wrote to Gringotts, to convert more wizard money to muggle. He secretly met with the head goblin, and retrieved his money. No one was the wiser.

The morning Harry was to pick up Cindy, he dressed extra early, and hopped into his car keeping the persona of a muggle living in a muggle village.

He drove as fast as legally possible. When he arrived, he was greeted by the Headmistress wearing a smile, and carrying papers in her left hand.

“Mr. Black, congratulations, it’s a girl.” She exclaimed.

“The adoption went through?” He asked excitedly.

"Yes it did, no problems at all." She answered, shaking his hand.

Harry handed the headmistress the briefcase he was carrying and immediately went up to the girl's dormitory. Cindy was sitting on her bed, Harry walked up to her.

"Hello Cindy." Harry said happily.

"Hello Mr. Black." She said softly.

"No, call me Harry." Harry told her.

"Ok Harry." She said shyly.

"Are you lonely Cindy?" Harry asked expectantly.

"Yes." She said, looking sad.

"Me too, do you want to come live with me?" He asked hopefully.

"You want to be my daddy?" She asked with tears in her eyes.

"Yes Cindy, I do." Harry declared.

She leapt off the bed, and embraced Harry in a loving hug.

"When can we go?" She asked excitedly.

"In a few minutes, I just have to sign some papers." He explained.

She had a sudden look of despair. "Are you going to bring me back?" She asked tentatively.

Harry smiled lovingly at her. "Never, it's you and me, for good and for bad." He told her, with tears in his own eyes. She hugged him again.

Harry went back to the Headmistress' office, and signed the adoption papers, happily.

"Are you sure you don't want a trial with her?" The Headmistress asked concernedly.

"No ma'am, we'll be a family for good and bad." Harry answered honestly. She smiled.

When Harry and Cindy finally arrived at home, they walked up to the front door, and stopped.

"Now, are you ready to see your new house?" Harry asked nervously.

"Yes." She said happily.

They entered the warm and inviting foyer. Cindy was looking around amazed at what she saw.

"It's so big." She said. "How many people live here?" She asked, looking up at her new father.

"Well, there's you and me, and" Harry paused. "Do you know what elves are?" Harry asked her quickly.

"Yes, Santa has elves, they make toys." She said in an obvious tone.

"Ok well, they don't all make toys, some help around the house. They cook, and clean, and do laundry; they're called house elves. We have two elves living here." Harry explained.

"Real live elves? Can I see them?" She asked excitedly.

"Of course you can, but you have to promise not to tell anybody about them. Do you promise?" Harry asked.

"Yes I promise. Can I see them?" She added impatiently.

"Yes you may, now don't be surprised; they like to appear out of nowhere." Harry said to her. "Dobby, Winky, come here please." He called out into the empty room.

Instantly, Dobby and Winky appeared in front of Harry and Cindy. "Cindy, this is Dobby." He motioned to Dobby. "And this is Winky." He motioned to Winky. "Dobby, Winky, this is Cindy, she will be living with us." Harry told his servants.

Cindy stood staring nervously. "They're real?" She asked.

“Yes miss, we’re real.” Winky answered.

Cindy shrieked, and hugged Harry’s leg. “It’s ok Cindy, they’re here to take care of us; they won’t hurt you.” Harry explained to Cindy.

Cindy composed herself, and held out her hand. “Please to meet you.” She said in her childish voice.

They all shook hands. “Dobby is pleased to meet miss.” Dobby said shaking her hand.

“Any Winky is pleased to meet miss.” Winky said shaking her hand in turn.

“If you need anything, just let them know, they are our friends.” Harry told Cindy. Dobby and Winky beamed at how they were referred to as friends.

Harry spent the entire day showing Cindy the house, and property. She was thrilled, she had never dreamed a house could be so big. During dinner that evening, Harry decided to inform her of the magical world.

“Cindy, do you remember how I told you, you were special?” Harry asked, hoping she remembered.

“Yes.” She said through a mouth full of potatoes.

“Well I’m special too. I can make things happen. I can make my hair grow, and I can disappear and reappear like you.” He explained.

“Really, I’m like you?” She asked expectantly.

“Yes, there are many people like us; they’re called witches and wizards.” Harry said.

“Like the ugly witch in Hansel and Gretel?” She asked nervously.

“No. Those are just stories written by people who don’t understand our kind.” Harry clarified. “Here, do you see that painting on the wall?”

He motioned to the painting of Ginny he had over the mantle in the dinning room.

"She's pretty." Cindy announced.

"She's a witch. She's the woman I want to marry." Harry said.

"She's going to be my new mommy?" Cindy asked excitedly.

"Yes, one day she'll be your mum. But she's also a witch, like you." Harry answered.

"Why am I not a wizard like you?" She asked.

"Wizards are boys, and witches are girls." Harry clarified.

"Oh, so I'm a witch, and my future mommy's a witch?" She asked.

"Yes Cindy, very good, do you want to see some magic?" Harry asked, hoping to ease her mind.

"Yeah," she said jumping from her chair.

"Ok." He said smiling.

Harry took the glass of water that was in front of him. He waved his hand, and a phoenix made of water emerged; it flew around the room at Harry's command. It stopped in front of the amazed Cindy. When she reached out to touch it, she quickly pulled her hand back giggling.

"It's wet." She said.

"It's water, just water. Hold out your hand." Harry instructed.

When Cindy complied, the bird landed on her hand, and melted. She was laughing hysterically.

"Ok young lady, bed time." Harry announced looking at his watch.

"Do I have to daddy?" She said.

Harry almost broke down crying, she called him daddy. "I'm going to spoil her rotten." He thought to himself.

They went up to her room for bed. Cindy changed into her brand new silk pajamas; Harry tucked her in and she waited expectantly. He remembered a lullaby from one of his other timelines, and began to sing to his new daughter.

By the time he was done, she was sleeping peacefully. Harry walked down to the library, and sat quietly.

The thought of him having a child seemed ludicrous at first, but Harry had never been happier in his life. Cindy, like Ginny, was a missing piece of his life. He resolved to never allow anything to harm her.

Life, in spite of Voldemort, was good.

Chapter 11

When Harry woke Cindy on the morning of New Years Eve, he was more nervous than he could ever remember being in his life. He had spent the week slowly showing Cindy the wizarding world. He first showed her magical pictures, and then went on to books depicting magical creatures, and eventually to magic itself. She was a five-year-old sponge. She couldn't stop asking questions, and Harry couldn't stop teaching. It was what he was meant to do. She had even managed to perform some wandless magic on her own; Harry could not be prouder.

Today was not only the day he would finally show her his animagus form, but it would be the first time she would meet Ginny, and more importantly, it would be the first time Ginny met Cindy.

Harry had managed to see Ginny late at night by apparating to the Burrow, but he could never manage to tell her about Cindy. He so wanted them to love each other. Harry knew that above all, Cindy's happiness was all he cared about. And she was already aching to meet Ginny.

After breakfast, Harry took Cindy into the ball room, which was the largest room in the house.

"Ok Cindy, remember how I told you some witches and wizards can turn into animals?" He asked her quietly.

"Yes daddy." She answered lovingly.

"Well, I'm one of those wizards." He announced.

"Really," she perked up. "What kind of animal?" She asked excitedly.

"I'm a griffin. A griffin is half lion and half eagle. But I look exactly like a lion, except I have wings." He explained.

"Wings, can you fly daddy?" She asked getting even more excited.

"Yes Cindy, I can." He answered.

“Can I see? Can I see?” She asked quickly.

“All right now, don’t be scared, it’s just me.” Harry warned her.

Harry took two steps back, and in an instant he was a griffin. Cindy walked up to him fearlessly, and began to pet him, Harry purred, it was a noise he had never made. He spread his wings wide to give her a good look. One quick moment later, he was back.

“Can I have a ride?” She asked expectantly.

“Not while it’s still daylight, we can’t let the locals see us do magic, remember?” He half scolded her.

“Yes daddy.” She said quietly.

“But I’ll tell you what, when it gets really dark out tonight, I’ll take you for a ride.” Harry conceded.

“Goodie,” she exclaimed.

They spent the rest of the day working on magic. Harry noticed that because she, like Harry, had no preconceived notions on what could or could not be done; she could do almost anything.

They were primarily working on elemental magic. Harry was teaching her how to control water. He felt that was the easiest thing to master using wandless magic.

Cindy had been able to make large ripples in the water almost every time she tried, Harry was pleased, but Cindy was ecstatic.

When the time finally arose for Harry to pick Ginny up at the Burrow, he told Cindy to help Dobby and Winky clean her room, which he knew they never would allow, and that he’d be back in a short while.

Harry and Ginny had made arrangements to meet just outside of the Burrow. Ginny had told her parents that she would be bringing in the New Year with some muggle friends from town. They reluctantly agreed. It had been the point that she was wearing Harry’s ring that clinched a victory for her.

Harry apparated his entire car to the Weasley house, being that it was night, and the vehicle was moving at the time, nobody noticed. Harry stopped just outside the Weasley property, and blew the horn.

Ginny had informed her parents that the muggle father of her friend would be doing just as Harry had done. When Molly looked out of the door, Harry instinctively tapped the horn informing Molly that the driver had seen her. She eased, and waved back.

Ginny went around to the passenger side, and got in the car. Harry immediately pulled away, so as not to give Ginny the opportunity to keep him longer than expected. When they were several kilometers away, Harry smiled at Ginny.

"You look beautiful." He said simply, driving the car.

"Thanks. Nice car." She answered.

"Oh sure, I compliment your beauty, and you just compliment my car." Harry joked. Her self-control disappeared.

She immediately took Harry in a loving embrace, and kissed him deeply, Harry almost crashed.

"Ginny! I'm driving." He said exasperatedly.

"Sure, you're a powerful wizard, but you can't kiss and drive at the same time." She joked, they both laughed.

"Harry, where are we?" She asked, now realizing she had never seen the area.

"That's a secret." Harry answered.

They pulled into the drive of his home, which he was now calling Cindyland. Harry parked the car in the garage, and shut it down.

"Ginny, I have to tell you something serious." Harry said nervously.

She immediately feared the worst. "You're not breaking up with me Harry, are you?" She asked with tears in her eyes, and fear in her voice.

Harry couldn't help but laugh. "No. I love you, why would I even consider such a stupid idea? Besides, your brother and Hermione would kill me." Harry said laughing.

"Then why are you so nervous?" She asked.

"I have news. Either it's good news, or it's bad news, depending on how you feel." Harry answered.

"Ok, spill it." She demanded.

"First I need to know, do you want children?" Harry asked.

She immediately feared the worst again; she thought Harry was going to tell her he couldn't have children. She debated whether or not to answer honestly.

"Yes." She finally answered honestly.

"Do you like kids?" Harry asked tentatively.

"Of course, what are you playing at?" She asked exasperatedly.

"I adopted a child." He said quickly.

"What?" She demanded.

"I adopted a child." He repeated.

"Why would you do such a thing at your age?" She asked angrily.

"Because I couldn't leave her in that muggle orphanage, she's a witch." Harry explained.

Ginny softened. "You do know what having a child means?" Ginny asked seriously.

"Yes, she's been living with me for the last week." Harry said.

"She's here already?" Ginny said, sounding angry again.

"Ginny please, she, just like you, means everything to me. I don't mean to sound callous, but you're not an orphan, you don't know how I feel. She's exactly like me, an orphan, magical around a bunch of muggles, and ridiculed. I couldn't leave her there." Harry explained himself.

Ginny immediately understood. "I'm sorry Harry, you're right, I don't know, but I'm willing to understand. I trust you Harry Potter; I know you will always do the right thing, no matter how difficult. That's why I love you; you're one of a kind." Ginny said, kissing Harry deeply.

When they finally broke, Ginny had a nervous look on her face. "What if she doesn't like me? What if she's jealous?" She asked.

"Let's find out." Harry said, opening his car door.

"I'm not ready. I need a new dress, I need my hair done, I need..."

"You're perfect." Harry interrupted.

Harry went around to the passenger side, and opened the door. When they reached the entrance, Harry turned back to Ginny.

"Are you ready?" Harry asked her.

"No." She said honestly. Harry laughed.

He opened the front door, and stepped inside. Ginny was amazed about the size of the house. She had seen magically enlarged homes before, but this one was one of a kind. The moment the front door closed, they were greeted by a loud screech.

"Daddy, is that you!" Cindy yelled from her room.

"Yes Cindy. Can you come down here, please?" He yelled back.

She immediately ran down the stairs.

"Daddy, look at the new dress Winky..." She stopped in mid sentence. "Mommy, is that you?" She asked with tears in her eyes.

Ginny broke down crying hysterically. She hugged Cindy like she had never hugged anyone before. She was filled with so much love; she couldn't control herself. Harry stood there amazed. He expected a pleasant greeting, but not love at first sight.

"You're my future mommy, daddy told me." Cindy said when they broke the hug.

"And you're my baby." Ginny said, still crying. Ginny did not understand all the emotions she was feeling, but she did understand that Cindy was now, and would always be her daughter.

"Well, I think that went well. I guess I should make the introductions. Ginny, this is Cindy, Cindy; this is Ginny, your future mum." Harry said with a giggle.

"Can I call you mommy?" Cindy asked.

Ginny began crying again. "Of course you can sweetheart, of course you can." Ginny said, hugging her again.

"Did Winky make you a new dress?" Harry asked Cindy.

"Oh yeah daddy, do you like it?" Cindy asked happily.

"I think it's beautiful." Harry told her.

"Winky? So Dobby and Winky did go with you," Ginny said knowingly to Harry.

"Yes miss." Dobby's voice came from behind her.

She turned to see Dobby and Winky smiling at her.

"Is the house complete sir?" Winky asked.

"Yes Winky, I do believe it is." Harry said with a smile.

They all sat for dinner, Harry looked around the table, he had never been happier. Harry and Ginny discussed the various goings on at Hogwarts, and the Weasley household. They carefully danced around

the subject of the ministry and Voldemort. Ginny glowed like never before. She was perfect.

"Daddy's going to take my flying later." Cindy announced.

"Oh really, on a broom," Ginny asked her.

"No on his back." Cindy answered. Harry hung his head.

"Is there something you want to tell me Mr. Potter?" Ginny asked.

"Actually Ginny, no, but I have no choice now. I'm an animagus." Harry declared.

"A what, Harry James Potter, what do you think you were doing studying animagus training by yourself?" Ginny bellowed.

"Actually Ginny, McGonagall trained me." Harry said calmly.

"When," Ginny asked astounded.

"That I can't tell you, but she did." Harry explained.

"What kind of animal can fly a small child on its back?" She asked him.

"I'm a griffin." Harry answered plainly.

"Can I see?" Ginny asked excitedly.

"I think it's time for Cindy's first flight. Dobby," Harry called. Dobby appeared and bowed. "Open the large window in the ball room. Keep the lights off. I'm taking Cindy for a flight." Harry instructed.

"A flight sir," Dobby asked.

"Yes Dobby, I'm a griffin animagus. Now please open the window." Harry said.

"Yes sir." Dobby said vanishing.

Harry immediately changed into his griffin form. Ginny helped Cindy onto his back, and then jumped on herself. Harry purred his approval. With only three steps, he took off for the window, and out.

They went soaring along the Scottish shoreline. Higher and faster he flew as Cindy kept requesting. Even Ginny loved the flight, after about an hour, Harry headed home, and into the ballroom.

Dobby and Winky were waiting when they arrived. The elves closed the window, and turned the lights back on.

When Harry changed back, Dobby approached him.

"Dobby and Winky has never seen griffin Harry Potter sir. We is pleased." Dobby informed Harry.

"I'm sorry I never mentioned Dobby, but it just never came up." Harry apologized to Dobby, who bowed, and took his leave from them.

"Someone has to get to bed." Harry announced.

"Oh daddy, please, can I stay up with mommy." Cindy pleaded.

"I'm sorry Cindy, but she has to go home soon, she'll be back before you know it." Harry explained.

"Ok." She said sadly. She ran up to Ginny and hugged and kissed her. "I'll miss you mommy." She said.

"I'll miss you too." Ginny said crying.

After Cindy had her lullaby, Harry showed Ginny around the house.

"She looks just like you." Ginny said as she closed Cindy's bedroom door.

"Really, I thought she looked like a Weasley." Harry joked.

"Not with those eyes, so which one is your bedroom," she asked slyly.

"This one," Harry said, opening the door to his bedroom.

Ginny was amazed. It contained an oversized bed, several dressers, a piano, a harp, and a large screen television.

“Now that bed looks really comfortable.” Ginny said, removing her shirt.

Harry stood in awe. She removed her shoes, socks, jeans, bra, followed finally by her panties. She lay naked on Harry’s bed, waiting for his arrival. Harry wasted no time. Before he made it to the bed, he was as naked as Ginny.

The last two hours of the year, Ginny spent in ecstasy, Harry had a God given talent for pleasing her, and she loved it. She never thought it could be that good. He pleased her several times before the New Year began.

When Harry and Ginny heard the old grandfather clock in the foyer, they kissed again.

“Happy New Year,” Harry whispered in Ginny’s ear.

“It is now.” Ginny said slyly. Harry laughed.

“What time is your mother expecting you home?” Harry asked, getting back to reality.

“One,” Ginny said sadly.

“Then I think we should shower, and get dressed.” Harry said.

“Shower, I don’t think I need a shower.” She told him.

“No, you don’t need one, but trust me; it will be worth your while.” Harry promised.

After the shower, which included another sexual encounter, Harry drove Ginny home. They kissed quickly goodnight, and she walked into the Burrow.

When Ginny entered the house, she went around hugging and kissing her family, wishing them a Happy New Year. When she reached her, Peggy whispered in Ginny's ear.

"We have to talk." Peggy said.

Ginny and Peggy went to the empty kitchen. They both sat at the table.

"Something you want to tell me?" Peggy asked sternly.

"What do you mean?" Ginny asked indignantly.

"Harry? You went to meet him tonight." Peggy declared.

"How do you know that?" Ginny asked shocked.

"I used to be a fortuneteller, remember. I saw a vision of the two of you kissing, and saying Happy New Year." Peggy said.

Ginny blushed. "What else did you see?" She asked shyly.

"If you're asking if I noticed neither one of you wearing clothes, than yes, I did." Peggy said; sounding a little amused.

"You're not going to say anything, are you?" Ginny asked.

"No, I don't watch and tell." Peggy said laughing.

"No I didn't mean about Harry and I making love, I meant about Harry at all." Ginny clarified.

"Oh, is he still hiding?" She asked knowingly.

"Yes, no one is supposed to know I see and talk to him. He's worried for me." Ginny explained.

"Ok, I won't say a word to anyone, but promise me you'll be careful, if you know what I mean." Peggy said, giving Ginny a knowing look.

"I've already taken care of that. Unexpected pregnancy won't be a problem. My problems are much bigger." Ginny said, hanging her head.

"Yeah, I know. Worrying whether your fiancé will be alive or dead the next time you see him, is a problem I would not wish on my worst enemy." Peggy said, looking downhearted.

"Can I confide in you?" Ginny asked, looking helpless.

"You know you can, I would never violate your trust." Peggy answered immediately.

"Harry adopted a child." Ginny whispered.

"He what," Peggy whispered back.

"He adopted a five year old witch that was living in a muggle orphanage." Ginny clarified.

"Oh, I see, someone just like him. That sounds like Harry, thinks of everyone but himself. Have you met her?" Peggy asked, realizing the potential problem.

"Yes, tonight, it was love at first sight." Ginny said.

"She doesn't see you as a threat?" Peggy asked amazed.

"Actually, she sees me as her mother." Ginny answered.

The news shocked Peggy. "Wow. This is a fairytale. You find the man of your dreams at fifteen, you love him, he loves you, and he has a daughter who wants you as her mother. What else, a big house? Fancy car, servants?" Peggy joked.

"Um, actually, all of the above," Ginny said, trying not to laugh. Peggy, on the other hand, lost control.

"I don't know what you did to deserve such a life, but I'm jealous." Peggy said laughing.

Ginny suddenly looked sad. "You don't think I'm going to lose him, do you?" Ginny asked nervously.

Peggy grew serious as well. "Annie and I have tried to see Harry's future, but we just can't. We can't explain it; it's never been a problem for either one of us." Peggy answered.

Ginny was about to speak, but Peggy cut her off. "Actually, it gets worse, we can't see yours either. We can't tell if you'll live to be two hundred, or die tomorrow, it scares us." Peggy finished.

Ginny looked at her watch. "I'm meeting Harry in exactly 48 hours. I want you to accidentally walk in on us here in the kitchen. I need someone to talk to in front of Harry." Ginny told her.

"I will, just make sure your clothes are on." Peggy joked.

"Why, I'm not shy around you, and Harry's very well endowed, so he won't mind." Ginny joked back.

"Oh, you've seen that many to make comparisons to." Peggy continued the joke.

"Yeah actually, six brothers and only two bathrooms," Ginny said. They both laughed.

Two nights later, Ginny was sitting in the kitchen, it was about ten minutes to one, and Harry was due any minute. She began to pace, knowing Peggy was going to walk in on them, which made her slightly nervous. Would she be able to keep Harry under control, would she be able to keep herself under control? She didn't know.

Making love to Harry had been the single most pleasurable experience of her life. She wanted it more and more.

The moment the clock turned one; Harry appeared next to Ginny. She hugged and kissed him like never before. Their love was obvious.

"I've missed you." Harry said softly.

"I've missed you too." Ginny said.

"Cindy misses you too." Harry said nervously.

"And I miss her too. I can't stop thinking about the two of you. I can't believe how quickly I fell for that little girl." Ginny explained.

"I can't believe the way I fell for her too. I can't wait until you're out of Hogwarts, so we can get married." Harry said with a hint of remorse.

Ginny looked over Harry's shoulder. "Uh, Harry." She said pointing towards the doorway.

Harry did not need to turn to see Peggy standing there, he just knew.

"Hello Peggy." Harry said, turning to face her.

She had a look of victory on her face. Ginny was impressed at the way she carried herself.

"I'm glad I decided to get a glass of water." Peggy declared.

"So am I." Harry said, walking over to hug her. "I've missed you Peggy." Harry said, staring into her eyes.

"Then you should have come back. In the daylight," she added.

"If you understood what happened, you probably wouldn't want me here." Harry said sadly.

"I do know, and more importantly, dad knows. He knew before he gave permission for you to marry his youngest daughter." She said with a bark in her voice.

"I'm sorry. I just find it hard just living with myself, so I don't expect any of you to." Harry explained.

"You're welcome here anytime." Peggy said.

"Even at one in the morning," Harry joked.

"Not if you're going to be alone with my baby sister." She said smiling.

"Peggy!" Ginny exclaimed.

The three sat down and started talking about their lives; Harry had, several times, started to mention Cindy, but stopped himself. Peggy was starting to get annoyed.

“Spill it Potter, what are you hiding?” Peggy asked annoyed.

“I adopted a child.” Harry conceded.

“I already know Harry, I had a vision.” She lied.

“Did you know I was coming tonight?” He asked.

“Yes, actually I did.” She answered.

Harry nodded, he should have guessed, she was a seer.

They talked for another hour, before Harry decided to go home. He kissed Ginny deeply, then turned and gave Peggy a small peck on the cheek.

“Be careful.” He said apparating back home.

The ride back to platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ was a quiet one. None of the Weasley’s spoke of Harry, or his absence. Ginny was especially downhearted. She would have to go long periods of time without seeing the man she loved, or the child she came to call daughter.

After the prefects meeting on the train, Ron, Hermione and Ginny went to find a compartment for themselves. The only thing they could find was Neville in a compartment by himself. They entered.

“Hey mate.” Ron greeted Neville warmly.

“Hey Ron, Hermione, Ginny, how was your holiday?” He asked happily.

“Not great, yours,” Ginny answered honestly.

“Mine was. My parents and I spent Christmas in the Bahamas, it was great.” Neville explained.

Neville noticed the look on everyone's face. "What happened?" He asked concernedly.

"Harry." Ron said simply.

"Did you see him?" He asked excitedly.

"Well, yes and no. We saw a projection of him, not him personally." Hermione explained.

"He gave us all personal messages." Ginny clarified.

"How," Neville asked.

Ginny reached into her pocket. "This." She said, handing the box to Neville.

He read the directions, and followed them.

"I don't think it will work for you." Ron said, just before an image of Harry projected in front of them.

"Hey Neville, I'm glad to see your curiosity got the best of you." Neville laughed. "I wanted to apologize to you personally, you were starting to really develop as a wizard, and I abandoned you. I'm sorry. I hope having your parents back has helped in some way, I know what it's like not to have parents. Since the night we freed them," Neville gasped. "You've been a force to be reckoned with, and I'm glad I helped. I want you to know, even though we weren't the best of friends in the beginning, I count you as one of my very best friends now. The morning after you arrive in the castle after the holiday, you will receive a gift from me; it is a ring. Please wear it always; it instantly warns me if you are in any danger. I will never let anything happen to the people I love, I promise. Well mate; take care of yourself. Bye."

The image vanished.

"Something you care to share with the class?" Ron asked knowingly.

"It was supposed to be a secret; Harry saved my mum and dad." Neville answered.

"I knew it!" Hermione exclaimed. "Only Harry could have the magic powers strong enough to overcome madness." She added.

Ginny looked like she was ready to burst. "I can't keep this secret!" She yelled. They all looked at her like she was crazy.

"What secret?" Hermione asked.

"Harry, he has a daughter." Ginny said.

"What? Did you say Harry has a daughter?" Hermione asked disbelievingly.

"Yes, an adopted daughter." Ginny clarified.

"When did this happen? And come to think about it, how do you know?" Hermione asked quickly.

"Well, the day after boxing day, the 27th, was when he adopted her, and I know because I've been seeing Harry, and Cindy." Ginny said nervously. She knew the others were going to be upset.

"He has a daughter? Harry? I can't believe it. He's always afraid about losing one of us; I'd think he'd go crazy worrying about a daughter." Ron said flabbergasted.

"It's a long story; just understand she was a witch in a muggle orphanage." Ginny said.

"Ah, that explains it." Hermione said. "He felt a connection." She added.

"Ginny, what are you wearing?" Neville asked.

"What? Oh, the engagement ring, Harry proposed over the holidays." She answered matter-of-factly.

"Did you tell your father?" Neville asked surprised.

“Actually he asked my father for my hand, my father agreed.” She explained.

Neville was floored. He couldn’t believe what he was hearing, Harry was engaged to be married and he had a daughter. “Wow, that’s some holiday.” He said simply.

“Have you ever seen her?” Hermione asked.

“Yes, New Years Eve.” Ginny answered.

“You were supposed to be with muggles.” Ron said angrily.

“I know Ron, I lied.” She said.

“How did she react to you?” Hermione pressed.

“She calls me mommy.” Ginny said proudly.

“She calls you mummy?” Ron asked.

“No, I said mommy, she calls me mommy.” Ginny clarified.

“Same thing,” Ron said exasperatedly.

“Not when it’s coming from the cutest five year old you’ve ever seen.” Ginny explained.

“How do you feel about it?” Hermione asked, feeling out Ginny.

“I call her my daughter, I love her.” Ginny answered honestly.

“Do you know what you’re getting into?” Hermione asked.

“Yes I do. I can’t explain the feelings of having a child love you like that, it’s, it’s, wonderful.” Ginny said smiling.

“I’m so jealous.” Hermione said.

Ron was about to speak, but Hermione cut him off. “Not a word.” She commanded.

They spent the rest of the train ride discussing the DA, and their plans. Ron took it upon himself to promote Hermione and Neville to majors. They were both thrilled.

Ron still had Harry's lesson plan, and they had managed to figure out how to teach the rest of the year.

The train pulled into Hogsmeade station, and they all headed for the carriages, and back to the castle.

A new term began.

Chapter 12

Hogwarts did not feel the same to Ginny; it felt more like a prison. In the outside world she had a fiancé who loved her, and his adopted daughter adored her, here, all she had was work.

Ginny sat in the Gryffindor common room staring into the fire, while Ron and Hermione made eyes at each other. She kept staring at her watch waiting for the one o'clock hour when Harry was due to apparate. She kept secretly hoping Ron and Hermione would either leave the common room for privacy or simply go to bed.

"Hey guys." Ginny began. "You know the DA common room is empty." Ginny prodded.

"Ginny!" Hermione gasped. "We're prefects." She said indignantly.

"All the better, if you get caught, you could say you heard a Gryffindor was out of the common room, and you went to investigate." Ginny suggested.

"Sis, Fred and George would be proud. That is the sneakiest thing I have ever heard. Thanks." Ron said happily.

"Ron, we can't." Hermione said.

"Why not, Ginny's idea is genius, we could use that excuse every day." Ron said, planting a suggestive kiss on Hermione. She softened.

"All right, but only for a little while," she conceded.

They thanked Ginny again, and left the common room. Ginny checked her watch again; it was ten minutes after one. "Oh no, Harry's not coming." She thought.

"I thought they'd never leave." Harry said from behind Ginny.

"Harry." She whispered. "I was starting to think you wouldn't come." She said hugging him tightly.

"I've been waiting for ten minutes. Do you know how hard it is to stay disapparated for so long?" He asked before planting a passionate kiss on her.

"Actually, no, you're probably the only one who does." Ginny said in a mock angry tone.

"Cindy misses you already." Harry announced.

"Oh God Harry, I've been missing her so bad." Ginny said with a tear in her eye. "Can you bring her by one of these nights?" She asked hopefully.

"Oh Yes Harry, bring her by." Hermione said mockingly.

They both turned around together, the shock on Ginny's face made Ron and Hermione laugh.

"Now Ginny, you don't really think I'm that dense, do you?" Ron asked with a smile on his face.

"Trying to lure us out of the common room, how obvious," Hermione said in an obvious tone.

"Ginny." Harry began, turning to face her. "You didn't really try to trick Hermione, did you? She's smarter than both of us put together." Harry said amused.

"I told them to use the DA common room for snogging. I even gave them an excuse in case they got caught." Ginny explained, now seeing the humor.

"I'm glad you're up, I've wanted to ask you something." Harry said to Ron and Hermione, as he walked up to the both of them, and embraced them; his brother and sister.

"What did you want to ask?" Hermione asked impatiently.

"Ron, Hermione, would you both do me the honor of being godparents to my daughter?" Harry asked formally.

“Really Harry? You want us as godparents?” Hermione asked through tears.

Ron walked up to Harry, and embraced him tightly. “It would be an honor, brother.” Ron said through tears of his own.

“Well I think Ron and I are exhausted, we’re going to bed. Right Ron,” Hermione asked in no uncertain terms.

“Uh, yeah, that’s right, we’re exhausted.” Ron agreed hugging Harry one last time, and turning towards the dormitories.

Hermione followed suit, but as she turned, she asked one final question. “When can we meet her?” Hermione asked.

“Finish the DA class on time Friday, and I’ll bring her by.” He said.

Hermione nodded and continued up to bed. Harry turned to Ginny.

“You told them.” Harry said, not sounding angry.

“How did you know?” She asked.

“They didn’t question me having a child.” Harry explained.

“I’m sorry Harry, but I was dieing to tell someone, and Ron and Hermione are family.” Ginny said nervously.

“I’m not angry, as you say, they’re family.” Harry said, kissing her deeply.

The week went by uneventfully for Ron, Hermione and Ginny. Harry met Ginny again on Wednesday, and wouldn’t return until Friday. Ginny was impatient the entire day on Friday, she couldn’t concentrate the entire time.

During the DA class, all Ron, Hermione and Ginny could talk about was seeing Cindy. Halfway through the class, Ron found a note in Harry’s old desk. When he read the note, he laughed.

“Hey ‘Mione, I guess Harry’s still teaching the class.” Ron said handing Hermione the note.

The note gave explicit instructions on advanced apparition. The instructions started with simple apparition, and progressed to mid-air and moving apparition. Hermione laughed out loud.

"Remind me to thank him." Ron said to her.

"I think you should dismiss the class early." Ginny said.

"You're right." Ron agreed.

Ron proceeded to dismiss the class, and inform them of up and coming training. They left talking excitedly.

"When do you expect Harry?" Hermione asked Ginny.

"He said he'd be here at four." Ginny answered distractedly.

"Well, he'll be here in twenty minutes." Ron said, trailing off as he looked at the door.

"Professor Dumbledore, what are you doing here?" Ron asked nervously.

"I received a note to be here at four, so I decided to come early." Dumbledore answered pleasantly.

"Who sent the note, sir?" Hermione asked.

"Harry did." Dumbledore said simply.

Charlie Weasley arrived shortly after Dumbledore, followed closely by McGonagall, both receiving the same note as Dumbledore.

Just before the clock struck four, Arthur and Molly came in.

"Mom, dad, don't tell me you received a note too?" Ron asked flabbergasted.

Arthur held up a piece of parchment. It was obvious Harry wanted his friends and family there. What totally threw Ron and the rest for a loop was when Snape arrived, just after the Weasley's.

“Ah Severus, I see you’ve received an invitation also.” Dumbledore said pleasantly.

“Yes Headmaster and I don’t appreciate letting a class leave early, so this better be important.” Snape hissed.

“It is Professor.” Harry announced upon arrival.

He placed Cindy on the floor, who immediately ran to Ginny.

“Mommy,” she exclaimed, hugging Ginny tightly.

Arthur, Molly and Charlie stared open-mouthed. They couldn’t believe what they just saw, and heard.

“Ginny? Who is that?” Charlie said, dumbfounded.

“This, this is Cindy, Harry’s adopted daughter.” Ginny answered distractedly, as she hugged and kissed Cindy.

Ginny picked her up, and purposely walked her over to Ron and Hermione. “Cindy, I’d like you to meet Ron and Hermione, they are going to be your godparents.” Ginny told Cindy.

“What are godparents?” Cindy asked Ginny.

“Well, godparents help to look after you, and if something were to happen to your parents, then they help to raise you. It is a very important job.” Ginny explained.

“Oh, so they are like a second set of parents.” She surmised.

“Exactly,” Ginny said happily.

“Can I hold you?” Hermione asked tentatively.

“Ok.” She said in her childish voice reaching out to Hermione.

“Molly.” Harry said, hugging her. “I wanted to introduce you to my daughter.” He said.

"When did you adopt a child?" Molly asked, with a mix of confusion, and elation at seeing Harry.

"The twenty seventh of December." Harry said simply, dragging Molly over to Ron, Ginny, Hermione and Cindy.

"Sweetheart, this is Molly, she's like my mother, so, she's like your grandmother." Harry told Cindy.

"You're my gamma?" Cindy asked Molly.

"I, I guess so." Molly said, still bewildered.

"Hurray, I have a gamma." She exclaimed, reaching out to hug Molly. Molly couldn't resist. She immediately began crying and kissing Cindy, over and over. Harry smiled.

"Professor Dumbledore." Harry approached the Headmaster, shaking his hand. "It's great to see you again, I've missed you." He said.

"Harry, I see you bring with you some surprise." Dumbledore said amusingly.

"I like to leave a lasting impression." Harry said smiling.

"You always like to be the center of attention. Now, is this why you disturbed me?" Snape hissed at Harry.

"Professor, do you really want to act like this in front of the Headmaster, and the Minister of Magic?" Harry asked, snidely.

"Just get to the point Potter." Snape barked.

"Very well, Ron, Charlie, can you two come over here a moment. I promise it won't be too long." Harry said in an amused tone.

They both pried themselves from Cindy and walked over to the other men.

"I've decided to actively pursue Voldemort and his Death Eaters. I'm sick and tired of waiting around while more innocent people are killed. But, I need your help." Harry said to them.

“What did you have in mind?” Dumbledore asked.

“I need you all to get me intelligence. I need to know the instant a Death Eater attack is occurring. I know you all have connections, and can help me.” Harry explained.

“Why you, the ministry has Aurors who can handle them.” Snape hissed.

“True and they’re very capable, but, I want to scare Voldemort. I want him to think I looking for him at every turn, I want him to second-guess himself, and I want him to make a mistake. Harry said.

“Harry, I don’t have any connections.” Ron said, feeling useless.

“You don’t? What about the two hundred elves you command?” Harry asked with a gleam in his eye.

“Oh yeah, I forgot.” Ron said happily.

“And you Professor Snape, I need you to get Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle on my side. They probably have more valuable intelligence than anybody else.” Harry said to Snape.

“And what if they’re unwilling?” Snape asked.

“They’ll be willing, they owe me their lives.” Harry said matter-of-factly.

“What will you do if you meet up with Voldemort Harry?” Dumbledore asked.

“I won’t. If I’m right, he’ll go into hiding. He’s still not up to full power, if he was, he would have attacked the school already.” Harry speculated.

“True enough, but why do you want him to go into hiding?” Dumbledore pressed.

“That will give us time to prepare the army.” Harry clarified.

“What army?” Snape asked rudely.

“Dumbledore’s Army,” Ginny answered indignantly, as she walked over.

“Severus, the students and elves Harry and Ron have been training are to act as a front line against the Death Eaters. They have been teaching magic that is not ordinarily taught at Hogwarts. They are a formidable group of Aurors.” Arthur said proudly.

“Aurors,” Ron asked.

“Dark Aurors, actually, I’m officially naming everyone in the DA, Dark Aurors, as of today. They will be chartered as a secret law enforcement department within the office of the Minister, I’m calling it; the Department for Dark Magi Enforcement.” Arthur announced.

“Excellent!” Ron exclaimed.

“And Harry, I’m naming you their Commander and Chief.” Arthur continued.

“Thank you Minister, but before I accept, I have to become a fully qualified wizard. Professor,” Harry said, turning to Dumbledore. “Is there any way I can take my NEWTS now, a year and a half early?” Harry asked the Headmaster.

“I don’t see why not, especially if you have the support of the office of the Minister of Magic.” Dumbledore said, motioning to Arthur.

“Absolutely, I’ll take a page from Fudge’s book, and make an official decree. Educational Decree Number 1; any student who by choice resolves to self educate, may take all required exams at a time of their choosing, enabling them to become fully qualified wizards.” Arthur said in an official tone.

“Thank you sir, that fits Fred and George as well.” Harry reminded Arthur.

“I know.” He whispered back.

“When would you like to start?” Dumbledore asked Harry.

“Monday morning too early,” Harry asked back.

“No, that would be fine.” Dumbledore answered.

“I’m saddened to have to leave this mutual admiration society, but I have important business to attend to.” Snape announced sarcastically, as he turned to leave the DA classroom.

“Harry, I must admit I was a little concerned about you adopting a child. But now that I’ve met her, and heard why you did, I’m proud of you.” Molly said, hugging Harry.

“Thank you Molly. That means a lot to me.” Harry said.

“So, where is my granddaughter?” Arthur exclaimed, walking over to Cindy.

Arthur picked her up, and began making the child laugh.

“Harry, tell me about Cindy.” Dumbledore asked.

“Well, on Christmas morning, I delivered some toys to a local muggle orphanage. There was a little girl who wouldn’t come down to play with the others, when I enquired, it turned out that the other children refused to play with her because strange things kept happening around her. I investigated more, and it turns out she was doing magic. I couldn’t leave her there to suffer like I did. So I used my fake identity, which is much older than I am, to adopt her. She already knows who I am, even though no one else in town knows. She had no last name, so I named her Potter. The locals think that was her original sir name, so they don’t question it. Since she’s been living with me, she has become quite the little witch.” Harry explained.

“Then she can do magic?” Dumbledore asked.

“Oh yes, wandless and elemental magic. She, like me, has no preconceived notions about magic, so she doesn’t know you need a wand for magic.” Harry answered.

“Incredible, in the magical world, we are our worst enemy. Can I meet her?” Dumbledore asked with a sparkle in his eye.

“Of course Professor,” Harry answered, directing the Headmaster to Cindy and the others.

“Cindy, I’d like you to meet Professor Dumbledore, he’s my teacher.” Harry said proudly.

“Hello Professor Dumbly door.” Cindy said, trying to pronounce his name.

“Call me Uncle Albus.” Dumbledore said, picking her up.

“Ron, is it just me, or does Cindy remind you of someone?” Hermione asked Ron.

“Um, no?” Ron answered, slightly bewildered.

After another hour of pleasant conversation, Dumbledore conjured a large table, and food for them all to eat. It was a true family affair. During dinner, Dumbledore turned to Harry with his trademark sparkle in his eye.

“Harry, after you pass the NEWTS.” Dumbledore began, showing no sign of doubt. “I was wondering if you would like to take on teaching permanently.” Dumbledore asked.

“Only if you allow me to teach magic that is not on the curriculum.” Harry answered honestly.

“Am I correct in assuming that you want to continue the DA, long after the original members are gone?” Dumbledore asked knowingly.

“Well sir, not the DA, the Department for Dark Magi Enforcement.” Harry corrected.

“I stand corrected.” Dumbledore began with a laugh. “I think we have a deal.” Dumbledore finished.

When Cindy began nodding off, Harry announced it was time to leave. He picked up the sleepy child, bid his farewell to his friends, and apparated home.

“So, did Harry ever mention when and where the baptism is?” Ginny asked Ron and Hermione.

“I forgot to ask.” Ron said, slapping his forehead.

“I was too busy playing with my goddaughter to ask.” Hermione said

Ginny laughed at the two of them. “Don’t worry, I remembered. It’s on Holy Saturday, in a small muggle church in Scotland.” Ginny said amused.

“Oh good, during Easter holiday,” Hermione said following Ginny to the Gryffindor common room.

They all slept better that night knowing Harry would be back.

The NEWTS started early on Monday morning. The Great Hall was converted after breakfast that day. Harry left Cindy in the care of Dobby and Winky, knowing he couldn’t take the tests and watch her at the same time. The first test was potions, Harry was not as nervous as he expected. He knew he had the two other lifetimes of information to refer back to, so he confidently walked into the Hall, and awaited his instructions.

The NEWTS were not unlike the OWLS, a written part, followed by a practical exercise. Three members of the Ministry were on hand to conduct the tests; Harry recognized them from the OWLS he took only the year before.

“Mr. Potter, today and tomorrow we will give you all the written examinations, and Wednesday and Thursday, the entire practical exercises,” said a stern looking witch.

“Yes ma’am.” Harry said simply.

They sat him down at the lone table, handed him the exam, and began the timer. Harry quickly perused the exam, and smiled to himself, he knew all of it. He grabbed his quill, and began writing as fast as he could.

The potions exam only took Harry an hour. When he turned the test in, the bearded wizard kept asking him if he was sure, Harry just smiled and told him he was, and was ready for the next test.

From potions they went to transfiguration, then to care of magical creatures, and the final exam for the morning, history of magic. Harry was amazed he knew as much as he did, it almost seemed like child's play. Harry had done the entire day's work before lunch. When he handed in his final exam, the two wizards, and witch began speaking in hushed tones.

"Mr. Potter, you have a choice of continuing the exams after lunch, or continuing them tomorrow. Which do you prefer?" The stern witch asked him.

"I would prefer to finish them today." Harry said confidently.

"Very well, meet us here after lunch." The bearded wizard added.

Harry walked out of the Great Hall, and proceeded to apparate to the DA common room, where he awaited the arrival of the DA members. This would be the first time he saw them all, since he left school in November. He was nervous.

The first to arrive was Neville Longbottom, Harry immediately noticed the confidence that emanated from him, and he was even flirting with a fourth year Ravenclaw, who was obviously flirting back. Harry smiled.

"All right there Neville." Harry said, startling the boy.

"Harry!" He exclaimed, rushing over, and giving Harry a hug. "Good to see you mate, good to see you." Neville added.

"You too, mate." Harry answered.

"Good to see you back, General." The Ravenclaw said, shaking Harry's hand.

"It's not, General any more, I have no rank." Harry said not sounding a bit remorseful.

Harry sat at the opposite end of the long dining table. He was used to sitting at the head, but knew this was Ron's place now.

"So it's Major Longbottom now, hey Neville?" Harry asked, noticing the rank insignia on his robe.

"Oh yeah, Ron gave me a promotion." Neville said proudly.

"It's well deserved." Harry said honestly.

The rest of the DA began to arrive. Since Harry was at the end closest to the door, and his back was turned, nobody noticed him until they all sat down to lunch. Ron was the first to notice him.

"So, how were the tests?" Ron asked across the table.

Everyone turned to see who he was speaking to. They all froze at the sight. Harry was back.

"Not bad, I still have some more written, and then the practical." Harry answered.

Everyone who hadn't seen him began talking all at once. It was comical; no one would relent long enough to allow someone else to ask a question. It took Ron's voice to get their attention.

"Quiet!" Ron bellowed. They responded immediately. "Give Harry a break; this is only his first day back." Ron told them calmly.

"Where's Cindy?" Ginny asked longingly.

"I couldn't bring her, she's home with Dobby and Winky." Harry answered apologetically.

"Who's Cindy?" Cho asked.

"It's not important." Hermione answered, leaving no doubt she wanted the topic dropped.

Lunch was a very pleasant affair nonetheless. People would continually ask him questions, and he would refuse to answer them, Harry was back.

After lunch, Harry managed to finish the remaining exams; Astronomy, Herbology, divination, and his favorite, Defense Against the Dark Arts, though he kept having to tell himself to use the textbook answers. The next day would be spent on practical exercises. He was thrilled. Perhaps he could finish them off in one day as well.

He decided not to meet the DA for dinner; he missed Cindy, and wanted to get home as soon as possible. Immediately after the final exam for the day, Harry thanked the Ministry members, and left the Hall, as soon as he was out of sight, he apparated home.

Cindy was playing in the foyer of their house; Cindyland, when Harry apparated home.

"Daddy," she bellowed, when she saw him. "Teach me some more." She said hugging her adopted father.

"Sure sweetheart, let me just change, and I'll come right down." He told her, putting her back on the floor.

The rest of the day was spent teaching Cindy more elemental magic. This was her favorite. She had become quite adept at wind and water magic, and was starting to move on to fire magic. Harry knew she would grow to be the most powerful witch in history, she believed everything her father said, and would find a way to accomplish it.

Harry was putting her to bed. She seemed exhausted, and he thought she was sleeping.

"Daddy," she asked.

"Yes baby." Harry answered.

"What other kind of magic can learn?" She asked expectantly.

"Well, let's see. There are spells, charms, jinxes and curses of all types. You could start learning some summoning and banishing charms, they're always fun. You could learn levitation, which was always my favorite. There's just so much, you won't ever be bored." Harry said surely.

“Can we do more magic everyday; I like it better than my toys.” She said in her childish voice.

“I’ll tell you what, tomorrow, and maybe Wednesday, I’ll be out, but after that, we could start spending four hours every day on magic, how does that sound?” Harry asked.

“Ok.” She said, starting to fall asleep.

“Good night sweetheart.” Harry said.

“Good night daddy.” She said dreamily.

The next day was Harry’s Practical exercises. Up first was Potions again. It took Harry the full two hours to complete the exam, owing to the fact that it had to stew for seventy five minutes. Harry felt sure he had gotten it right.

Up next was Transfiguration. He was surprised when one of the proctors walked up to ask a question.

“Dumbledore informs us that you are an animagus, is this true?” The stern witch asked.

“Indeed?” Harry questioned.

She stepped closer so as to whisper in his ear. “I’m a member of the Order.” She said conspiratorially.

“Ah.” Was all Harry managed to say.

“He also says your registration has been listed as Top Ministry Security, is this also true?” She asked.

“Yes ma’am.” Harry answered.

“I’m going to excuse the other two proctors who do not have the security level I have, and as the exam, I would like to see you turn into your animagus form.

“No problem.” Harry said, still with no emotion.

The stern witch excused the other two proctors for the exam, much to their bewilderment. As soon as they were gone, she instructed Harry to begin. Harry immediately changed into his griffin form. She was impressed at the speed and perfection of which he did it, but Harry made no attempt at showing her his wings, but her obviously trained eye, noticed them immediately.

When Harry changed back, she ran right up to him. "Mr. Potter, I have never heard of a wizard who could become a magical creature, this is certainly a first. Full marks." She added smiling for the first time.

Harry finished care of magical creatures within an hour. History of magic had no practical, so Harry was free for the rest of the morning.

After lunch, he did Herbology, Divination, and finally Harry's favorite, Defense. At the time for the defense exam, Harry asked the proctors, if he would be allowed to have a spectator, they agreed.

Harry ran from the Great Hall, and apparated home, where he grabbed Cindy, and brought her back. The proctors were stunned at Harry's guest.

"Who is this, Mr. Potter?" The bearded wizard asked.

"Just a friend," Harry answered, not wanting them to know. He sat her next to the proctors, and took his place in the Hall.

"This exam may be given in one of three ways, NEWT level, advanced NEWT level, and Auror level. You may choose now." The stern witch instructed.

"Is there anything higher?" Harry asked confidently.

They all looked stunned. "No Mr. Potter, there is not. In the Auror level exam, everything that attacks you is real, their magic is full force, and there is no way of stopping them." She answered in a serious tone.

"That sounds like fun, let's do that." Harry said amusingly.

“Mr. Potter, you understand, we’re talking about full wizards, dementors, vampires, and werewolves.” She said nervously.

“That’s fine, when can we start?” Harry asked expectantly.

The three proctors began to talk quietly, when they all agreed, they turned back to Harry. “If you’re ready Mr. Potter, we’ll begin now.” The bearded wizard said.

“Bring them on.” Harry said confidently.

And so it began, before Harry could even think, five dementors appeared out of the blue, Harry conjured a patronus, to keep them at bay. Next came a werewolf, Harry transfigured his wand into a silver knife, and banished it to the werewolf’s heart. Next was the vampire, the proctors gasped needlessly when they realized Harry did not have his wand. Harry summoned the sword that the suit of armor on the stairs leading to Gryffindor tower held. The moment the sword arrived, Harry beheaded the vampire, it died instantly. Lastly there were the five wizards. Harry had no problem with them, he attacked relentlessly, they had no chance, and they were defeated before they could even cast a single spell. Harry summoned his wand, and banished the dementors, then turned to the proctors to await their comments.

“There are many questions that need answering about your performance. But, those are questions for another day. Full marks Mr. Potter.” The third proctor said, speaking for the first time.

“The final exam for the day will be held at midnight in the Astronomy tower. Do not be late.” The stern witch said, standing to leave.

Cindy ran up to her father. “Daddy, that was great!” Cindy said excitedly.

“Thank you sweetie,” Harry said, happy his daughter enjoyed the show.

Harry escorted her around the halls of Hogwarts. He showed her the Gryffindor common room, his old dormitory, and then on to the DA classroom where he knew no one would be.

When they arrived, Harry took the time to show Cindy some simple summoning and banishing charms. They worked together until the end of the school day. Harry took her to the DA common room to wait for the members to arrive.

Hermione was the first to arrive, when she saw Cindy, she lost all self control, and rushed to hug her tightly.

“Harry! How’s it going?” Hermione asked about the NEWTS.

“Oh fine, I brought Cindy here to see the Defense NEWT, she enjoyed it immensely.” Harry said hugging Hermione.

Ginny walked in and immediately hugged and kissed Harry, followed by Cindy. When the rest of the DA members arrived, Harry took the time to explain about Cindy and what he’d been up to, but kept out all information relating to what he had planned.

When Cindy stated falling asleep, Harry took her home, then returned for his last NEWT exam, Astronomy.

Harry vividly remembered the Astronomy OWL, that was the night Umbridge tried to take Hagrid, and attacked McGonagall. At least nothing like that would happen tonight.

Harry was forced to take the full two hours; he was never good at Astronomy. When he did finally finish, he felt confident he passed, perhaps even did well.

When he was about to leave, he did notice Hagrid talking to someone by the edge of the forest, he decided to take a look. He apparated to just inside the forest, where he wouldn’t be seen, standing next to Hagrid was the last person Harry expected to see, RJ.

The Princess RJ Vaganos, Harry’s vampire lover from the other timeline, and she looked incredible; she wore a tight fitting black leather outfit, and carried her famous sword on her back. Harry debated whether or not to approach her. He knew he still had deep rooted feelings for her, and just being this close, was more than he could stand. “Ginny.” He whispered to himself. “I’m engaged to Ginny.” He thought.

Yes, he decided, nothing would make him cheat on the woman he loved; there was no harm in talking to RJ.

Harry watched and waited, as soon as RJ left Hagrid's side, and returned to the forest, Harry decided to approach her.

He waited until she was near a clearing, and made his move.

"It's very dangerous to be walking around the forest at night." Harry said, making RJ turn and draw her sword.

"You have nothing to fear from me." Harry added.

"I'm sure I don't, but maybe you have something to fear from me." RJ retorted, causing Harry to laugh.

"Is that a fact?" Harry asked.

In one quick motion, RJ ran up to him, and swung her sword at his neck.

Chapter 13

When RJ looked at Harry's neck, instead of seeing her blade, she saw flowers.

"Oh, flowers for me, thank you." Harry said sarcastically, taking the flowers from her.

"What kind of wizard are you?" She asked

"The Harry Potter kind," Harry said amusingly.

"Harry Potter? I've heard of you, didn't you quit school?" She asked confused.

"Yes, that doesn't mean I don't still protect it." Harry said authoritatively.

"Can I have my blade back?" She asked, staring at the flowers.

Harry waved his hand, and the blade was back and he handed it back to her. RJ stuck the sword back into its sheath, and smiled.

"Impressive wizard, very impressive," she said.

She and Harry spent the rest of the night talking. It was amazing to Harry that they could get along just as well in this timeline, as in the other.

Harry knew he couldn't get too attached to RJ, so when dawn approached, Harry bid his farewell from her, knowing full well, he'd never see her again. Or so he thought.

The next morning, he and Cindy apparated to Hogwarts to see the Headmaster, when they arrived at his office door and knocked, Dumbledore greeted them.

"Harry, Cindy, what a nice surprise." He said pleasantly.

"Uncle Albus, daddy said I could come and watch the class later." Cindy exclaimed.

“How nice,” he said simply.

“Professor, I was wondering when I’d be receiving the results from my NEWTS?” Harry asked.

“Normally they take three weeks, but since Arthur is Minister, they’re right here.” Dumbledore said, handing Harry a sealed envelope.

Harry opened it with baited breath. He read it twice before handing it to Dumbledore.

“Well, it seems the Ministry now recognizes you as a fully qualified wizard.” Dumbledore said jovially. “There is something I think you should see.” Dumbledore added, handing Harry the Daily Prophet.

Minister Weasley Sets Things in Motion

Yesterday, the Office of the Minister announced two instrumental pieces of legislation. The first creates a new department within the Ministry that answers to the Minister only; it is called “The Department of Dark Magic Enforcement”. Its purpose is to combat and control the rise and spread of Dark Magic. He also announced the Commander and Chief of this new department is none other than “the Chosen One” Harry Potter. In a related piece of legislation, Minister Weasley has lowered the legal magical age to sixteen, obviously allowing Harry Potter to legally perform magic outside of school. The Minister also announced that Harry Potter has taken his NEWTS, and is now a fully qualified wizard. This is the most any Minister has done to prevent Dark Magic, and its rise. Dark wizards beware, Potter’s coming!

“I’m glad to see the entire wizarding community knew I passed my NEWTS before I did.” Harry said amusingly. He and Dumbledore laughed.

“I think I need to address the DA class today.” Harry said.

“I think you need to do more than that, I think you need to take it over again.” Dumbledore corrected him.

“Professor,” Harry began but was cut off.

“Albus Harry, I’m no longer your Headmaster.” Dumbledore said pleasantly.

“Albus, do you mind if I bring Cindy to the DA classes with me, she really enjoys watching magic performed.” Harry asked politely.

“Oh yes Uncle Albus, can I?” Cindy asked expectantly.

“I don’t see why not. As long as she’s willing,” Dumbledore answered.

“Oh thank you Uncle Albus.” She exclaimed, embracing Dumbledore tightly.

“You know Harry, if we all continue to get attached to this young lady, you may not be able to take her home anymore.” Dumbledore said jokingly.

They laughed again.

Harry summoned Dobby and Winky. He took the symbol for the new department he received from Arthur, and instructed them to create new uniforms, proudly displaying the symbol, which contained all five elements, a griffin, a wand and a lightning bolt inside a coat of arms.

Dobby and Winky enlisted the services of the over two hundred house elves, and returned shortly before two that afternoon with an exquisite silk robe, with all rank insignia in pure gold and silver, and the crest on each collar. Harry was impressed.

“How long until you can make these for all the members,” Harry asked politely.

“They should be ready in two hours.” Winky announced, popping out to go and help the rest of the house elves.

Harry stared at his rank insignia, instead of a typical rank insignia; it bore the letters, CNC, which obviously stood for Commander and Chief.

The rest of Dumbledore’s Army arrived just after two, this was their regular class. When each arrived, they all walked over to Harry to

congratulate him on both passing his NEWTS, and being made Commander and Chief of the new department.

Harry took their praise in stride; it seemed he was finally overcoming his shyness, once and for all.

When the group finally entered, Harry addressed the class.

"It's good to see you all. I'm sorry I left so abruptly last November, but unfortunately I didn't think someone like me should be in school, so I left. But that's not why I'm addressing you now. As you all know, the Minister has created a new department within the Ministry, and has seen fit to put me in charge. What you don't know is that only certified Aurors may be in this department, and who the rest of the members are, so allow me to introduce them. This is General Ronald Weasley." He motioned to Ron. "This is Colonel Hermione Granger." He motioned to Hermione. "These are Majors Virginia Weasley, Luna Lovegood and Neville Longbottom." He motioned to Ginny and Neville. "And these are the remaining Lieutenants." He motioned to the rest of the class. Harry waited for the information to sink in.

"We're certified Aurors?" Dean Thomas asked astounded.

"No, you are certified; Dark Aurors. Or at least as of last Friday, when the Minister certified you all personally," Harry clarified.

Harry waited again for the excited talking to subside.

"We will be taking an active roll in the apprehension of known Death Eaters. If any of you feel this may be too much for you, please feel free to resign." Harry paused. "The rest of you will now continue training until you're needed." Harry cut himself off quickly when he saw who entered the classroom.

Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle made their way over to where he stood. They stared at each other for a moment, before Malfoy started to speak.

"Snape said you wanted to see us." Malfoy said uncertainly.

“Professor Snape, Draco, Professor Snape.” Harry said, mimicking Dumbledore. “Thank you for coming. Have a seat.” Harry said, conjuring three chairs in front of his desk. He waited for them to sit. “I wanted to know your stand on the Voldemort issue.” Harry said emotionlessly.

“We choose the winning side.” Malfoy said vaguely.

“Which side is that?” Harry asked, still with no emotion.

Malfoy thought for a moment. “The Ministry’s side,” he clarified.

“What will you be willing to do for the Ministry?” Harry asked calmly.

Malfoy flushed for a moment. “What ever it takes to get him back,” Malfoy spat, referring to his father. “But, that doesn’t mean I want to join your band of do-gooders.” Malfoy added.

“And what about you two,” Harry asked Crabbe and Goyle.

They were momentarily shocked to be asked a question directly.

“Uh, whatever Draco says,” Crabbe said, and Goyle grunted his agreement.

“No, I want to know where you stand, and what you’re willing to do.” Harry clarified.

The two looked at each other, and then to Malfoy, they seemed almost afraid to speak.

“The Ministry’s side,” Goyle answered.

“And we’ll do what we need to.” Crabbe added.

“Would you be willing to join us?” Harry asked.

They looked at each other again, then back to Malfoy, then back to each other.

“Yes.” They both said with conviction.

“Crabbe! Goyle! What do you think you’re doing?” Malfoy exclaimed.

They looked at each other, and then turned to Malfoy.

“The right thing,” Goyle said.

“Right,” Crabbe agreed.

“Excellent.” Harry said, standing.

“Neville,” he called to him. “See that Crabbe and Goyle here are trained, if they need any remedial work, make sure they get it.” Harry instructed him.

Crabbe and Goyle followed Neville. Malfoy was stunned; they weren’t following his lead any more. They were thinking on their own. Malfoy stormed out of the DA classroom. Crabbe and Goyle began their training.

Harry let Cindy watch, and sometimes participate in the class. She seemed particularly amused by Crabbe and Goyle, and they, like so many others, quickly fell for her.

Towards the end of class, Crabbe walked up to Harry. “Who is the little girl, your niece?” Crabbe asked.

“No Vincent, she’s my daughter.” Harry answered him using his first name for the first time.

Crabbe walked away, if it were possible, even more confused than before.

The next afternoon, while Harry was working in the DA classroom, he received a most surprising shock, twenty Slytherins walked in to see him. Goyle was leading them.

“Sir, we were wondering if they could ask you something?” Goyle asked, motioning to his housemates.

A seventh year Slytherin, whom Harry did not know, walked up to him.

"Professor Potter, we heard you were taking volunteers to fight the Dark Lord and his Death Eaters, we want to join." He said purposefully.

"Are you all willing to do what it takes?" Harry asked.

"Yes sir, they all want to help bring down the Dark Lord." Goyle said confidently.

"Let's see what they've got." Harry commanded, standing to duel with the Slytherins.

They pulled out their wands as one. Immediately spells were flying from every direction. The Slytherins were better than Harry expected. Harry just stood rooted in place taking all their curses, hexes and jinxes until he finally smiled. He raised his hand and all twenty wands flew from the Slytherins and landed on Harry's desk.

"Very good," he said, returning their wands. None of the Slytherins could believe that twenty students couldn't even give an unarmed Harry a nose bleed. They became even more anxious about joining than before. "Dumbledore has not allowed me new students in my advanced defense class, so we'll be working after classes' everyday. If you cannot make it, then I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do." Harry told them.

"We'll make it." The seventh year Slytherin said with conviction.

"Good, then we'll start today. General!" He called out to Ron who had just walked in. "New recruits," Harry said, motioning to the twenty Slytherins. "We'll train them after classes' everyday." Harry commanded. He could tell this didn't bode well with Ron, he never liked the Slytherins, but he also knew Ron would not disobey him.

"Yes sir." Ron said dejectedly.

Ron used Neville to gauge each individual on his or her dueling technique. He categorized them as beginner, intermediate and advanced, and assigned them an individual to oversee their training. Harry was impressed.

While the training was being conducted, Harry saw a silvery dove fly into him. "Trouble," Harry said softly. He turned and vanished.

Harry apparated to the house of a Ministry member, there were three Death Eaters threatening the Minister of Education. They were ordering him to join them, or they would kill his five year old daughter. This did not sit well with Harry.

He got their attention, and began a barrage of spells specifically aimed at causing pain to the Death Eaters. When he decided they had had enough, Harry stopped.

"You," Harry said to the youngest of the three, a man in his early twenties with blond hair, and blue eyes. "Go and tell your master that I'm coming for him. You tell him every time he sends Death Eaters, I'll be there looking for him. You tell him I want him and him alone. Do you understand?" He spat at the Death Eater, who just nodded. Harry banished him away.

Harry used the binding spell to trap the other two, and quickly spoke to the Minister of Education in a hushed tone.

"Don't be shy with the press; you let them know exactly what happened here. The people must know what's going on." Harry told him.

"Yes sir." The man said nervously.

Harry touched the other two Death Eaters, and they apparated away.

Harry returned to the DA common room, now called the war room, and sat down with Cindy to eat. Cindy had been watching each lesson held in the DA classroom with more interest than the students attending the class. She was so excited; she spent the next hour telling her father all that had happened. He laughed in spite of himself.

When Ron finally arrived, he sat directly next to Harry rather than in his place at the head of the table.

"What happened, Harry?" He asked, knowing Harry quickly apparated earlier.

“Death Eater attack, no one was hurt.” Harry said shortly motioning to Cindy. Ron understood immediately.

Harry took Cindy home shortly after dinner, and returned to the war room. Ron, Hermione, Ginny and Neville were sitting around waiting for him to return.

When Harry arrived, he told them all that happened, including what he told the Death Eater he released. They were all shocked by Harry’s story.

“That’s dangerous Harry; don’t you think he’ll come after you?” Hermione asked.

“No, actually, I think he’ll go deeper into hiding. He doesn’t want to loose, and he’s not strong enough to face me, so he’ll just hide, until we’re ready.” Harry answered confidently.

“OK, I think Ron and Hermione are tired.” Ginny announced, causing a grunt of complaint from Ron, but Hermione quickly ushered him out. Hermione knew Ginny and Harry had not been alone in quite some time.

“Stay guys, I’ll take Ginny home, we can be alone there.” Harry told them as they stood. Ron got a sinister look in his eye.

“Good idea Harry, then maybe Hermione and I can be alone.” Ron said to Harry while looking at Hermione who blushed.

Harry smiled, touched Ginny on the arm, and they vanished.

They spent the entire night together. They were both happy, and satisfied.

“OK Harry, where did you learn that?” Ginny asked breathlessly after the third round of love making.

“You just bring out the best in me.” Harry said, using the line from one of the other timelines.

“You do know what to say Mr. Potter.” Ginny said smiling.

“And you certainly are beautiful, Mrs. Potter.” Harry said back, making her smile even more.

By Valentine’s Day, Harry had intervened on no less than eight separate Death Eater attacks, and each and every time, he would let one go to inform Voldemort of his intentions. Since Valentine’s Day fell on a Friday, Harry had the intention of taking Ginny somewhere special, he just hadn’t decided where.

The day was passing by like any other, until he received a visitor to his new office.

Harry heard a knock on the door.

“Come in.” He called out. Malfoy entered.

“I was wondering if we could talk.” He said without his trademark drawl.

“Of course, please come in, have a seat.” Harry said pleasantly.

Malfoy sat, and stared at the surroundings, Harry’s new office was filled with pictures of Cindy and Ginny. Harry made no attempt to hide his feelings for either.

“Who’s the little girl?” Malfoy asked, avoiding his purpose for coming.

“She’s my adopted daughter, Cindy.” Harry said, still maintaining his pleasant demeanor.

“She’s very cute.” Malfoy said.

“Thank you.” Harry continued to let him take his time to get to the point.

“I, um, I was wondering if it was too late to join.” Malfoy said quickly.

“Of course not Draco, you’re welcome anytime.” Harry said smiling.

“But I would like to know, do you want to be an enlisted or commissioned officer?” Harry asked, knowing his answer.

“Do I have a choice?” He asked.

“I think you’re a very powerful wizard, if you set your mind to it, you can do whatever you want, and so, yes you do have a choice.” Harry explained.

“What do I have to do to be commissioned?” Malfoy asked.

“Just sign up to be, what did you call it, oh yeah, a do-gooder.” Harry answered, not sounding angry.

“Oh yeah, sorry about that, I just didn’t think Crabbe and Goyle would want to.” Malfoy explained.

“You do know they have first names.” Harry said rather than asked.

“Yeah, I know, it’s just that I’ve always called them that.” Malfoy said.

“And you’ve always called me Potter, or potty, or any number of other names, but that doesn’t mean you can’t call me Harry.” Harry said still speaking pleasantly.

“I’ll try, Harry.” Malfoy said.

“Excellent! Now, we may have to convince some of the others who think they know you and your intentions, are you prepared to confront them?” Harry asked, sounding more and more like Dumbledore.

“I’m not afraid of what people think or say, I just want to do what’s right.” Malfoy said, not taking Harry by surprise.

“I must tell you this as a courtesy, if you join us; your life will be in danger, almost as much as the Weasley’s. Your father wants you dead as much as he wants Arthur dead, which puts you in a very precarious position.” Harry said sadly.

“I know, but whether I join or not, my life will still be in danger, and I want to be able to keep my mother safe. She’s always been a buffer from my father, she’s a good woman Harry, and I love her.” Malfoy confided in Harry.

“Does she feel threatened?” Harry asked concernedly.

“Yes, but she’s afraid if she runs, my father would come after me.” Malfoy said honestly.

“That’s inevitable anyway. He’s coming here to kill us both, we know this already, but once you get to know the department, you’ll know we can take care of ourselves, all of us.” Harry explained.

“Do you think Weasley will let me in, he is the General?” Malfoy asked honestly.

“His name is Ron, but he’ll let you in because I order it, I’m also sure he will not warm up to you any sooner than you’ll warm up to him.” Harry said with a smile.

“Yeah, sometime near hell freezing over.” Malfoy joked.

“Draco, one last bit of information, do you know the entire department are certified Dark Aurors?” Harry asked.

“Dark Aurors, what the hell are Dark Aurors?” Malfoy asked.

“Dark Aurors are the elite, they are the members of the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement, they are my students.” Harry answered.

“What’s the difference?” Malfoy asked curiously.

“Aurors are the experts in Magic, Dark Aurors are experts in Advanced Magic.” Harry saw he was still confused. “You don’t understand, Draco, all the things I’ve been teaching them, they know more, and can do more than any Auror, and some more than any other wizard on Earth. This means for you to become a commissioned officer, you have to become a Dark Auror.” Harry explained.

“How long would it take?” Malfoy asked.

“That’s up to you, how much time and effort you put in, directly effects the amount of time required.” Harry answered.

"Then I want in, I never wanted to become a Death Eater like my father, I never wanted anything to do with the Dark Lord, I want to live my life my way." Malfoy said.

"Good, I'm glad you feel that way, I respect you." Harry said, thinking back to one of the other timelines, when he loved Malfoy as a brother.

Malfoy was shocked to hear Harry proclaim his respect for him. "I'll let you in on a secret, and if you repeat it, I'll deny it, but, I was always jealous of how everything came so easy for you. You always learned things the rest of us couldn't." Malfoy admitted.

"Well, if you want to be trained, let's get you a uniform." Harry said standing. "Winky!" He called out to no one. Winky appeared and bowed. "Draco needs a uniform as fast as you can, make sure the rank reflects a lieutenant's rank." Harry commanded.

"Yes sir." She said, and vanished with a pop.

"Let's go down to the classroom." Harry said, leading him out the door.

When Harry arrived at the DA classroom, class was in full session. Ron was working on advance apparition. Harry had Dumbledore removed the anti-apparition barriers in the classroom. You still could not apparate in and out, but you could apparate within the room.

"Hermione," he called to her.

"Draco here has joined our ranks, could you make sure he gets up to speed on what we're teaching?" He asked politely.

"Of course Harry." She said, and then turned to Malfoy. "Welcome Draco, I'm glad you came." She said politely.

She took Draco over to Cho and Parvati who were practicing their apparition.

"Girls, could you help to get Draco up to speed with the rest of the class?" Hermione asked them.

"Sure." Cho said.

“We’d love to.” Parvati said, blushing slightly.

Harry smiled as he saw how quickly the girls wanted to help. Ron, on the other hand, did not look happy.

“Why’d you let him here?” Ron asked angrily.

Harry gave him a sad look. “Because he wants to join, he has as much right to be here as anybody else. Please Ron, give him a chance, we need the houses united, and allowing him in, goes a long way.” Harry explained.

“All right, we’ll teach him like any other, but he’ll never be my friend, nor will I ever trust him.” Ron said with a bark in his voice.

“I trust him.” Harry said, turning to leave.

Ron’s eyes grew huge when he heard Harry admit his trust for Malfoy. Ron just couldn’t believe it.

When the after school class ended, around six that evening, Harry took Ginny and Cindy aside.

“Ok ladies, time to go.” He announced.

“Go? Go where?” Ginny asked confused.

Harry touched both girls, and they appeared in his house.

“Ok Cindy, Dobby and Winky will be looking after you tonight; I’m taking your mother out on a date.” He told his daughter.

“Ok daddy, have fun.” She said, hugging and kissing them both.

“Harry, where are we going?” She demanded.

“That’s a secret; first, I have a surprise up on our bed.” Harry told her.

She gave him a questioning look, and walked upstairs. When she was there, Harry heard her yell.

“Harry! It’s beautiful!” She exclaimed.

“Put it on!” He yelled back.

Harry waited about half of an hour before Ginny came down. She was wearing a very form fitting black evening gown, and, Harry noticed, nothing else. He smiled.

“Everyone’s going to be so jealous.” He said, giving her a kiss.

“Well Mr. Potter, where are we going?” She asked again.

Harry took her hand, and they vanished. They appeared on a private yacht anchored outside a large city.

“What city is that?” She asked in awe.

“New York City.” Harry answered.

“Shouldn’t it be cold?” She asked noticing the weather.

“I’ve magically altered the air around the boat so we can enjoy dinner outside.” Harry explained.

“Well then, Mr. Potter, I must say, I approve.” She told him.

They spent the evening dining under the stars, and then the part she loved best, making love under the stars. Harry had informed her he put a silencing and privacy charm on the boat, so no one would be able to see or hear them. Ginny let herself go. It was the best lovemaking either one had experienced.

While they were lying under the stars, Ginny was absentmindedly drawing circles on Harry’s chest with her finger.

“Harry, who owns this boat,” she asked.

“We do,” Harry answered simply.

“We do,” she said, snapping to attention.

“Yeah, I bought it last month, her name is The Ginny.” Harry explained.

She began to cry softly. "You named it after me?" She asked.

"Of course I did, I love you." He said confidently.

Just before dawn, Harry took Ginny back to Hogwarts. They apparated straight to the Gryffindor common room, Harry kissed her good night, and apparated home.

The next day found Ginny asleep until noon. Hermione walked into her dorm to wake her.

"Hey sleepy head, time to get up." She said jokingly.

"Let me sleep, I was out all night." She said without thinking.

"Oh really," Hermione exclaimed with a laugh.

Ginny immediately sat up. "What?" She said, looking to see who heard her. "Oh, it's just you. I was out with Harry last night." She said, wiping the sleep from her eyes.

"And where were you young lady?" Hermione did her best Molly impression.

"New York." She answered simply.

"Really," Hermione was now interested. "Was it nice?"

"I don't know we were anchored just outside the city on The Ginny." She said.

"What's the Ginny?" Hermione pressed.

"Harry's yacht," Ginny said, still half asleep.

"Harry has a yacht? How big," Hermione kept questioning.

"I think he said it was forty meters." Ginny answered. "He told me he keeps it docked near Cindyland." Ginny added.

"What's Cindyland?" Now Hermione really felt out of touch.

“Harry’s house in Scotland,” Ginny said, now finally awake.

“Is there anything else Harry has that I don’t know about?” Hermione asked somewhat angrily.

“No I don’t think so, oh, wait, he has a BMW, I hear that’s an expensive car.” Ginny said.

“A BMW, how rich is Harry?” Hermione was growing angrier; her best friend had too many secrets that his girlfriend knew about.

“I don’t know, but if you like, we can all have dinner at his house tonight.” Ginny said, trying to get Hermione to calm down.

“Ginny, we’re prefects; we’re not supposed to go sneaking out of school for dinner dates.” Hermione said indignantly.

“Ok, Ron and I will go.” Ginny said standing and moving towards the loo.

“I didn’t say I wouldn’t go.” Hermione called out to her. Ginny smiled.

“Really, we can go see Harry’s house?” Ron asked excitedly when the girls told him.

“Yeah, but don’t tell anybody, or Dumbledore will find out.” Ginny told her brother.

Ginny went to Harry’s office hoping to find him there. When she knocked, she was amazed to hear Harry answer.

“Hi Harry, got a sec?” She asked.

“For you my dear, anytime,” he answered.

“I kind of invited Ron and Hermione over to your house for dinner tonight,” she said quickly.

“Oh really, and where will you be?” He teased.

“I’ll be there too.” She answered, slapping his arm.

“Oh, well, in that case, fine.” Harry answered.

“I told them to meet us at six in the war room.” Ginny added.

“Make it four; I want to spend some time with them outside of school.” Harry said.

“Sounds great,” she said, turning to leave, and then stopped. “Oh Harry, do you realize you’re having an affair with a student?” Ginny asked jokingly.

“Do you think it bothers my fiancé?” Harry joked back.

“I don’t know, she might be jealous,” Ginny added.

“Well, she’ll just have to deal with it; I’m in love with that student.” Harry said making Ginny smile.

“I love you too, Harry.” She added as she left.

Harry met Ginny, Ron and Hermione exactly at four in the war room. They had the foresight to ensure they would be alone. Harry had them all touch his arm, and they apparated to his house.

Harry had Cindy give Ron and Hermione a quick tour of the house, and by five they were all sitting around talking animatedly.

“What do you think Voldemort’s up to?” Ron asked Harry.

“I think he’s going to plan something big. He has to show his Death Eaters and the general public that he’s not afraid of me. I think he’ll hit Hogwarts.” Harry answered honestly.

“You really think so Harry?” Hermione asked aghast.

“Yeah, but I don’t expect him to be there, I expect Lucius.” Harry added.

“Why?” Ginny asked.

“Because he’ll want someone he trusts to lead the attack, that way if he succeeds, it’s Voldemort’s victory, and if he fails, it’s Malfoy’s defeat.” Harry explained.

“When did you become a strategist?” Ron asked jokingly.

“I learned from the best, you.” Harry answered honestly. “Never put your king in harms way.” Harry added, using chess terminology.

Dobby popped in. “Dinner is served.” He proclaimed.

The four friends sat down for a wonderfully quiet meal. They ate, and then talked way into the night. It was after three o’clock in the morning when Harry took them all home.

“That was wonderful Harry.” Hermione said, giving Harry a small kiss on the lips.

“Yeah mate, we have to do it more often.” Ron agreed, giving Harry a brotherly hug.

Ginny just walked up to him confidently. “I love you Harry Potter.” She said, kissing him deeply.

“And I love you Ginny Potter.” Harry said with a smile.

“Hey, not Potter yet.” Ron said jokingly.

“Not soon enough.” Ginny added, giving him another kiss.

Harry smiled and apparated home.

Chapter 14

Holy Saturday was approaching with remarkable speed. Harry had spent the better part of two days convincing Dumbledore and the Weasley's to allow Ginny, Ron and Hermione to attend Cindy's Baptism. Harry won out in the end.

The Easter Holiday was to begin the next day; Harry spent that day preparing practice lessons for the Dark Aurors, as the DA were now called, to do during their time away from Hogwarts. Most of them were not of age to perform magic outside of school, so Harry gave them wandless work to practice, mainly advanced apparition.

Harry had convinced the Weasley's to allow Ron and Ginny to spend Friday night and Saturday night at his house. He assured them that if no one in the Ministry could locate him before, that no Death Eater could fair any better. Hermione, on the other hand, needed permission from her parents, so Harry resolved to visit them that night to get their permission.

Harry had only met the Grangers a couple of times, and only spoke to them briefly. Harry really didn't know how to handle the conversation, but decided to play it by ear.

Hermione arrived home that night with her parents. She spent the entire car ride home explaining why she wanted to stay over Harry's, but her parents were stubborn. The only thing they would agree to was to meet with Harry that night, and discuss it.

Harry and Cindy arrived shortly before seven that night. Harry rang the bell and waited for someone to answer. Hermione came within moments, and greeted both Harry and Cindy with hugs and kisses. She led them inside.

Hermione's house was actually very nice. It had a large entry foyer, though not as large as Cindyland, the sitting room was warm and inviting and the pictures on the wall depicted a loving and caring family. Mr. Granger was the first to greet Harry.

"Mr. Potter, good to see you again." He said with little emotion.

"Nice to see you as well, sir," Harry responded politely. "This is my daughter, Cindy. Cindy, this is Mr. Granger." He introduced them.

"Nice to meet you," Cindy said confidently.

"Nice to meet you too," Mr. Granger responded, shaking her hand lightly.

Mrs. Granger came in shortly thereafter; Harry introduced her to Cindy as well. She was taken with the little girl.

They all sat down to dinner. Harry used the opportunity to begin his argument on Hermione's behalf.

"Sir, I know this is a strange request, I just feel Cindy would be happier if her godmother would spend the night before and after with her." Harry said.

"I understand, really I do, and it's just, in the present climate, not wise to allow Hermione to stay over anybody's house. Especially not yours, no offense, but if I understand it correctly, you're the number one target." Mr. Granger said honestly.

"This is true sir, I won't dent it, Voldemort is after me, but on the other hand, he's also afraid of me." Harry explained.

"Afraid of you," Mrs. Granger asked.

"Yes ma'am, I have been going around intercepting his followers and preventing them from accomplishing their evil tasks, each and every time releasing one of them to report back to his master, whereby sending Voldemort deeper and deeper into hiding." Harry answered.

"You, you're just a boy." Mr. Granger added.

"That I may be, but I am also a fully qualified wizard as well as the Commander and Chief of the Ministry of Magic's new division, the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement, it was created by, and answers only to the Minister of Magic himself." Harry explained.

"And what does this department do?" Mrs. Granger asked.

“We prevent the rise and spreading of Dark Magic.” Harry said.

“And you’re the Commander and Chief?” Mr. Granger asked.

“Yes sir. I’m the only one uniquely qualified to lead the department.” Harry said.

“Why are you uniquely qualified?” Mr. Granger pressed.

“Because I’m the only one Voldemort marked as his equal,” Harry said emotionlessly. “And he fears me.” Harry added.

The Grangers stared at Harry like they’d never seen anything like him before.

“Are you a viable threat to him?” Mr. Granger asked finally.

“Harry’s the most powerful wizard alive.” Hermione said proudly.

“Is that a fact?” Mrs. Granger asked.

“I am capable of magic other wizards cannot perform, yes.” Harry said.

“Like what?” Mr. Granger asked curiously.

“Elemental magic for instance,” Harry answered.

“What’s that?” Mrs. Granger asked.

“I can control the elements.” Harry answered simply.

“Control the elements? How,” Mr. Granger asked.

“Like this.” Harry said, making the water in his glass turn into a water creature, and fly around the room.

“Impressive, but how can that be of any use? You must understand, Hermione is our only child, she has to be kept safe.” Mrs. Granger said.

Harry got a determined look in his eye. "Mrs. Granger, Mr. Granger, if I showed you what I was capable of, you probably wouldn't even want me near your daughter, the fear I would instill in you would be worse than your fear of Voldemort." Harry said seriously.

"Do you love my daughter, Mr. Potter?" Mr. Granger asked.

"Yes." Harry answered.

"Would you use everything you know to keep my daughter safe?" Mr. Granger continued.

"I would die for her." Harry said emotionlessly.

"Then show me this magic, prove to me you can protect my only child." Mr. Granger said standing and moving towards Harry.

Harry stood to meet the man. The ground started quaking, the sun outside vanished behind clouds so black, nothing could have penetrated, all three Grangers began to swagger and sway; Harry and Cindy were the only ones unaffected. When Mr. Granger looked at Harry again, the quaking ceased, the clouds vanished as quickly as they had arrived, and Mr. Granger fell to his knees.

"I will never allow anybody to harm Hermione, she is my best friend, and I love her dearly." Harry said, staring releasing Mr. Granger from Harry's control.

Hermione couldn't believe what Harry just did. She had no idea what Harry had done, but more than that, he made the earth quake, he filled the sky with clouds; he could control the elements. When her mind cleared, she had realized something else, he emanated magic, and it was almost palpable, she felt it on her skin, she felt it in her very soul. She couldn't believe it.

Mr. Granger stood with Harry's help, and for an instant, he thought Harry's eyes were yellow. "You have my permission, but there is a catch." He began in a hoarse voice. "I want to see your house." He said after a moment.

"Done. I'll send my car for you tomorrow evening." Harry responded.

"If this Voldemort does not fear you now, he will." Mr. Granger added.

Hermione took Harry aside. "Your car?" She asked.

"I altered my car; it's now a limousine, a magical limousine." Harry explained.

"And who drives this car?" She asked.

"Dobby, of course." Harry answered smiling.

The rest of the night was quite pleasant; Harry and Cindy entertained the Grangers with a battle of water and fire creatures. When they finally said their goodbyes, Mrs. Granger hugged Harry warmly.

"Anyone who can impress my husband like you did has my blessing to protect my daughter." She whispered in his ear. "I'll see you tomorrow." She added.

"Do you see that necklace she wears?" Harry whispered in her ear. She nodded. "I had it charmed to alert me if Hermione is ever in any mortal peril. I will never let any harm befall her." Harry added in another whisper. She hugged him again.

Friday rolled around; it was Ginny's sixteenth birthday. Harry had a huge affair planned, he invited the entire Weasley family, but would not tell them where to apparate, instead only gave them a port key. He invited Albus Dumbledore, Hagrid, Professors McGonagall, and Flitwick, the Longbottoms, and several other Dark Aurors, even the Grangers were due to arrive.

Harry decided the best way to embarrass Ginny would be a surprise party, so he planned to take her, Ron and Hermione to a local restaurant for dinner giving the guests' time to arrive.

At six o'clock, he informed them it was time to go. The girls were both wearing new dresses, and they looked amazing. Harry had two custom Giorgio Armani suits made, one for him and one for Ron.

"We're the luckiest blokes on the planet." He said to Ron, as Ginny and Hermione came down the stairs.

They got into a cab Harry called since his car was to pick up the Grangers, and left for dinner.

"Now don't forget, I'm Harry Black." Harry instructed them.

"Ok, Harrison." Hermione mocked.

"Keep it up Granger, you'll be walking home." Harry joked.

Ron thoroughly enjoyed being waited upon like a celebrity. Harry, being the richest man in town, was always treated differently than anybody else, so naturally, his guests were as well.

They ate and drank to their heart's content. When Harry checked his watch, he noticed it was eight o'clock. "Time to party," he thought to himself. And with a knowing look to Ron and Hermione, they all chose to leave.

When they arrived at Harry's door, Harry held the door open for Ginny, and held back Ron and Hermione. Ginny fumbled for the muggle light switch, when she finally found it, and turned the light on, all she heard was; "SURPRISE!"

Ginny was stunned; all her brothers and sisters were there, even Percy, Dumbledore, McGonagall, Hagrid, even her friends from school. She started to cry as she went around hugging all those in attendance.

"Surprised?" George asked, as Ginny made it over to him.

"I can't believe it, this is so nice." She said hugging him.

"Well don't blame us, it was Harry's idea." Fred joked, as she hugged him.

Harry's dining room table was filled to capacity, every seat taken, and every plate full. Dumbledore sat on Harry's right, Arthur on Harry's left. They made a point of not discussing current events during the celebration. Ginny sat on the opposite end of the table with Ron on one side, and Molly on the other. They, on the other hand would occasionally comment on current events.

"This house is incredible." Mrs. Granger told Hermione. "And those little elf thingies, they're amazing." She added.

"This house is so well hidden; the entire Ministry could not find it." Hermione told her mother.

"And you'll be staying here?" Her father asked.

"Yes." Hermione said.

"Then you definitely have our blessing." Mr. Granger stated.

The night stretched on for hours, even Cindy was having a great time. When it finally came down for gifts, they all retired to the library, Harry's favorite room.

Ginny received a wide variety of gifts, clothes from her mother and sisters, books from Hermione and McGonagall, a sneak-o-scope from Dumbledore, and a pet snake from Hagrid, but nothing could have compared to what Harry had decided to give her, the deed to the Three Broomsticks.

"Harry, is this for real?" Ginny asked flabbergasted.

"What did he give you?" Ron asked, taking the paper from her.

Ron's eyes grew as large as lemons; he couldn't believe what he was looking at. Hermione snatched the paper from Ron, she was just as speechless, and it wasn't until Molly got the paper, that it was ever announced.

"The Three Broomsticks, you gave Ginny the Three Broomsticks?" Molly asked Harry, still not believing.

"Why Molly, don't you think she's worth it?" Harry asked jokingly.

"Of course I do, I just had no idea you could afford to give pubs out as gifts." Molly told her.

Harry never took his eyes off Ginny, and she never took her eyes off him. Without saying a word, they both said the same thing; I love you.

“Hey mate, you never gave me anything like that.” Ron said half jokingly and half jealously.

“Well, tomorrow you do get the honor of becoming godfather to my most valued possession, Cindy.” Harry said smiling.

“Yeah, that’s true.” Ron conceded.

“Besides, I’ve got a pair of gifts for Cindy’s godparents, which might come close to comparing.” Harry said vaguely.

“Did you buy the Three Broomsticks from Rosemerta?” George asked across the room.

“Actually George, Rosemerta doesn’t own the Three Broomsticks, she just works there.” Harry clarified.

“You know, Harry, I’ve had my eye on Quality Quidditch Supplies for some time, any chance of hooking me up on my birthday?” Fred asked jokingly. The entire room laughed.

“I don’t know Fred, are you willing to marry me like Ginny?” Harry joked back.

“For Quality Quidditch Supplies, I’ll marry you.” Ron joked from the other end of the library. Again the room burst into laughter.

“Sorry mate, I think Cindy has her heart set on Ginny becoming her mother, you just don’t fit the build.” Harry said, still joking.

When Cindy had gone to bed, the rest began talking about Voldemort.

“We don’t know how to find him, he’s deep under cover.” Arthur was telling Harry.

“There is a way Arthur, but it may require someone to risk their life.” Harry responded.

“Every one of us risks our lives everyday, what did you have in mind?” Dumbledore asked, sitting next to Harry’s throne-like chair.

Harry looked back and forth between the two men, then across the room. "Percy." Harry said simply.

"Percy, why him," Arthur asked defensively.

"Because everybody knows how Percy would do anything to advance in the Ministry, including," Harry paused to search for the right words. "Making a mistake," Harry said carefully.

"I see the logic, Harry. If Percy and Arthur were to have a public row, and Percy left again, then Voldemort would most definitely recruit him." Dumbledore explained.

"Exactly, we need someone we can trust on the inside; we need to fill Voldemort's ears with disinformation. He has to become more worried, if my plan is to succeed." Harry explained.

"I don't know if I want to risk my son on such a flimsy plan." Arthur said with a slight hiss to his voice.

"Arthur, I love you like a father, your family is my family, I'm engaged to be married to your daughter, believe me when I say, that there is no other choice." Harry pleaded.

"Well, how do you know he'll agree?" Arthur asked, starting to calm down.

"I think the Minister of Education needs a Deputy Minister, don't you agree, Albus?" Harry asked his former Headmaster.

Dumbledore smiled. "You know what Harry? I do agree." Dumbledore said

Arthur had just caught on. "OH, give Percy the job of Deputy Minister of Education in return for his services. Wouldn't that be bribery?" Arthur stated more than asked.

"No sir, its effective personnel management." Harry said with a smile.

"Well, Percy is an adult; I think you should ask him directly." Arthur finally conceded.

Arthur called his son over. Percy still looked questionable to Harry. "Had he already been recruited?" Harry wondered to himself.

"Percy, Harry has something to ask you." Arthur said, evidently washing his hands of the whole affair.

"Percy, the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement would like to employ your services." Harry said professionally.

"What exactly do you want?" Percy asked concernedly.

"I want you to be recruited by Voldemort." Harry answered, making Percy cringe at the sound of his name.

"And what do I get in return?" Percy asked selfishly.

"The position of Deputy Minister of Education," Harry answered.

"How long will the mission take?" Percy asked.

"No longer than a year." Harry answered.

"You want me to be a spy." Percy said simply.

"Yes." Harry answered in an obvious tone.

"And I'll get the Deputy Minister's job immediately afterwards?" Percy verified.

"Yes. The Minister of Magic has already agreed." Harry answered, motioning to Arthur.

"Ok, what do I have to do?" Percy asked with conviction.

Harry began telling Percy the plan, Harry kept as much of the information out as possible. Percy stood there absorbing every word to ensure perfection. Percy was nothing if not a perfectionist.

When the party finally came to a close, and all of the guests were gone, Harry directed Ron and Hermione to the bedroom they were sharing and directed Ginny to the master bedroom.

Harry did not know, nor did he want to know, what had happened that night in Ron and Hermione's bedroom. All he did know was that he and Ginny had a wonderful night, filled with almost no sleep. Ginny was legal.

Harry, Ginny, Ron, Hermione and Cindy arrived at the local Church twenty minutes early. Harry had arranged, with the help of a sizable donation, to be the only Baptism that day. The priest directed them as to how the ceremony would transpire, and asked if they were interested in a full service, Harry agreed.

Harry enlisted two separate photographers, one muggle photographer to film the ceremony, and one wizard photographer to take pictures. They both arrived on time, and finished setting up just prior to the beginning of the ceremony.

It was a perfect ceremony. The four adults were beaming the entire time, and Cindy couldn't have been more thrilled. The priest performed the mass flawlessly, and the photographers filmed it with perfection. Harry had never been happier.

Back at the house, Cindy received all sorts of gifts; mostly from Harry with various names he stuck on the cards, making Cindy think everyone was rich. By six o'clock that evening, Cindy was sound asleep in her room.

"Now for the adults," Harry said, handing each an envelope.

"Harry, you didn't have to get us anything." Hermione said, taking her envelope.

"Yes I did, you don't know what it means to me to have my two best friends godparents to my only daughter." Harry said almost on the verge of crying.

"Oh my," Hermione exclaimed. "Harry, I can't accept this." Hermione said, making Ron stop opening his, to look at hers.

"This is the deed to The Magical Book Emporium in Scotland." Ron said in a stunned tone.

"Yeah, I thought Hermione would appreciate owning a book store." Harry said smiling.

"What did you get Ron?" Ginny asked her brother.

"I don't know, let me look." He opened the envelope. "Wicked," was all he could say.

Hermione took the paper from him, and read it. "Everything Quidditch," she said.

"Ron, you got a Quidditch store." Ginny said needlessly.

"This one is also in Scotland." Hermione said. "Wait, they're two stores down from each other, judging by the addresses." Hermione realized.

"More to the point, they're an hour away by car, from this house." Harry clarified.

"Where did you get all this money to buy these things?" Ron asked still stunned.

Harry looked at his three friends. "I didn't buy them, I inherited them." Harry answered slightly saddened.

"Inherited? From who," Ron asked, before getting slapped by Hermione.

"That's all right Hermione, Ron; they're from the Black family estate." Harry explained.

"Oh, sorry mate, I didn't realize Sirius was so rich." Ron apologized.

"Well, he was and he wasn't. Though he did legally own all these properties, he never wanted anything to do with the Black fortune, so he made his own, well that is until he went to Azkaban. He had let the goblins of Gringotts just keep investing it, he never knew what he had, and now it's mine." Harry explained.

"Cool." Ron said, before getting another slap from Hermione.

Harry laughed. "It's ok Hermione, I know what he meant." Harry said.

"So!" Harry exclaimed, clapping his hands together and looking at Ron and Hermione. "Have you ever been on a yacht?" He asked.

Harry touched Ron and Hermione, with Ginny's arms wrapped around his waist, and they vanished.

They apparated on the deck of Harry's yacht, the Ginny, the weather seemed warm, but Ginny knew it could have been magic.

"Where are we?" Ginny asked.

"You see those lights over there?" Harry asked, pointing south. "That's Havana Cuba." He explained.

"Cool." Ron said simply, only this time receiving a loving hug from Hermione.

They ate dinner on board the yacht; Harry had ensured there would be plenty of food, and good music. They tuned the muggle radio to a local salsa radio station out of Key West Florida, and danced the night away. Even Ron, who hated to dance, enjoyed himself thoroughly.

Ginny was amazed to find out how well Harry could dance, even Hermione cut in several times, to enjoy his company.

"Where did you learn to dance?" Ginny asked him breathlessly.

"I told you, you just bring out the best in me." Harry said smiling.

"Mr. Potter, you are definitely going to enjoy my company tonight." Ginny said with a sly grin and a suggestive tone.

"I always enjoy your company, I love you." Harry said honestly.

"Then let me rephrase, you're going to have some orgasm tonight Harry." She said in her best tramp voice.

Harry smiled, and twirled her around.

When Harry had informed Ron and Hermione that he could put a privacy spell on the boat so no one could see or hear them, they decided to occupy the bow, while Harry and Ginny took over the stern.

By early morning, Harry showered with Ginny, Ron showered with Hermione, and the four apparated back to Ginnyland.

"How does the boat get back?" Ron asked curiously.

"I have a crew that sails it wherever I want." Harry said distractedly.

"Something wrong Harry?" Ginny asked, seeing the expression on Harry's face.

"Something just doesn't feel right." He said sensing something unexplainable.

Suddenly a silvery dove flew right into him. "Oh no," he said quietly.

The other three looked around.

"What's wrong?" Hermione asked nervously.

"McGonagall and Snape, they've been captured." Harry said, running up to his room to change.

When they were all changed, Harry informed Dobby and Winky to watch over, and protect Cindy, he touched his three friends, and they appeared in front of the Headmaster's door. Harry didn't bother to knock, and just ran in.

"Albus, what's happened?" Harry asked, trying to catch his breath.

Dumbledore waited for the four friends to enter the office, before he began.

"Minerva and Severus were captured during a mission for the Order." Dumbledore said calmly.

Where were they? When were they taken?" Harry asked quickly.

"They were in Diagon Alley, and they were taken late last night." He answered Harry.

"Do we know anything else?" Harry asked.

"No. All Tonks was able to see was them get stunned, and a port key activated. Aurors tried to identify where the port key went, but there was no residual magic left." Dumbledore said, looking very grim.

"I'll try the message spell again, it worked with Ginny." Harry said, standing from his chair.

"Don't bother Harry, I tried it this morning, I couldn't even get it to take corporeal form. Wherever they are, they're unplotable." Dumbledore explained.

"We have to do something!" Harry exclaimed.

"We're doing everything we can Harry; we just have to wait for the Aurors to do their jobs." Dumbledore said sadly.

"No sir, you have to wait, I don't." Harry said, walking towards the door.

"Harry. There's nothing you can do, you'll only be frustrated." Dumbledore said, as Harry walked out of the office.

Harry apparated to the war room, inside he began to pace trying to think of something Dumbledore hadn't.

Harry was so caught up in his thoughts; he never noticed Ron, Hermione and Ginny enter the room. They sat down and watched Harry pace back and forth.

"Percy!" Harry said allowed.

"What about him?" Ron asked, snapping Harry from his thoughts.

"What? Oh, Ron, I didn't see you there." Harry said startled.

"What about Percy?" Ron pressed.

"Percy has agreed to allow himself to be recruited by the Death Eaters. He will soon be going undercover for the Department." Harry answered him.

"Isn't that dangerous?" Ginny asked.

"Very, but no more dangerous than anything we do." Harry clarified.

"And you want him to do it now?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah, that way we can get to Malfoy, who'll give us McGonagall and Snape." Harry said excitedly.

"It won't work." Hermione told Harry nervously.

"Why." Harry said shortly.

"Timing, if they see such a wonderful opportunity to control the Ministry fall into their laps just after they capture two members of the Order, their going to know it's a setup." Hermione explained.

Harry was about to argue, but was cut off.

"She's right Harry, had this been done a week ago, or two weeks from now, it would be genius. But now, we'll be sacrificing Percy for nothing." Ginny said honestly.

Harry again was about to argue and was cut off.

"They're right Harry." Dumbledore began, entering the war room. "We've already considered this, there's no way it could work without Voldemort sensing a trap." The Headmaster said.

"We have to do something!" Harry bellowed again.

Harry began pacing the floor again. He ran through his mind every different scenario, he hated to admit to himself that they were right, but they were.

Harry stayed in the war room well into the night. He would not eat or rest, he would just pace back and forth. Ginny approached him just after midnight.

“Harry, go home. Cindy will be upset if she doesn’t see you in the morning, you’ve already been gone a whole day.” Ginny said.

Harry looked at Ginny through defeated eyes. He could not do anything for his former teachers, his friends. “Ok.” He conceded simply.

Ginny walked up to him, and hugged him tight. “Ready to go,” she announced. Harry didn’t question her, they both apparated to his house, his sanctuary.

Harry and Ginny lay in bed all night, they both fell asleep holding each other tightly.

“School starts on Wednesday.” Ginny said into the quiet room.

“Do your parents know where you are?” Harry asked calmly.

“Yes, I told them I did not want to leave your side, they didn’t argue.” Ginny said softly.

“Are they safe?” Harry asked quietly.

“The entire family has been moved to a secure house in Hogsmeade, they’re fine.” Ginny answered him.

“And Ron and Hermione,” he pressed, obviously worried for his friends.

“Hogwarts, they’ll be fine there.” Ginny said.

“How about Cindy,” Ginny asked.

“I’ll be taking her to Hogwarts most of the time, when she stays home, I’ve made a port key, and instructed Dobby and Winky what to do.” Harry answered her.

They awoke the next morning, ate and dressed. Harry took Ginny and Cindy to Hogwarts with him. They apparated to the war room where Ron and Hermione were already deep in conversation.

“Hey guys.” Ginny greeted them.

“Cindy!” Hermione exclaimed. Cindy ran up and hugged Hermione and Ron in turn.

Harry said nothing to his best friends; he sat down at the long table, and began his routine of figuring how to help McGonagall and Snape.

While Cindy played with the toys she conjured, the four friends were discussing the current situation.

“Do any of you sleep?” Dumbledore said, entering the room.

“Plenty of time to sleep when we’re dead,” Harry answered shortly.

“Harry.” Dumbledore started, sitting at the table. “I’ve invited Draco and Narcisa Malfoy to the castle; they’re due to arrive in an hour.” Dumbledore said to Harry.

“Malfoy,” Harry said looking at Dumbledore.

“Yes Harry, Draco and Narcisa.” Dumbledore repeated.

“Malfoy,” Harry said again.

“What is it Harry?” Ginny asked.

“Bait,” Harry said distractedly.

“Harry, we can’t use Draco as bait, it would be too dangerous.” Dumbledore warned.

“No Albus, not Draco, Narcisa.” Harry corrected him.

“What do you have in mind?” Dumbledore asked, with his curiosity now peaked.

“Lucius wants to get Draco, right? But Draco is at Hogwarts, Right? The only way to get to Draco is through his mother. If we can get Narcisa to lure Lucius out, then we could use Veritus serum to find out where McGonagall and Snape are.” Harry explained.

“Interesting,” Dumbledore said staring at his hands.

"Lucius would not expect it, he assumes his wife to be loyal. I could set a trap for him." Harry began, but was cut off. "The Aurors would," Dumbledore said.

"No not Aurors, me," Harry interrupted. "I could take on the appearance of Draco, and we could grab Lucius when he comes." Harry said.

"Harry, it would take a month to brew polyjuice potion, we don't have the time." Dumbledore explained.

"I don't need polyjuice potion, in one of the alternate timelines..." Harry was cut off by Hermione.

"What?" She exclaimed.

Harry realized what he had just said, alternate timeline, did he just say alternate timeline?

"Um, oh well, cat's out of the bag," he began, "I was shown two alternate timelines." Harry said to Hermione.

"What happened during them?" Hermione asked.

"Too much to explain now, but that's how I learned to be an animagus, I learned wandless magic, how to duel, to throw off the cruciatus curse, to dance, and to apparate. It's the reason I seem so different. In the second timeline, Michael showed me up to my twenty fifth birthday." Harry explained.

"Who's Michael?" Ginny asked.

"I'll answer that Harry, Michael is a Magi." Dumbledore said.

"A Magi, I thought they were only stories." Ginny said.

"What is a Magi?" Harry now asked.

"Well Harry, the Magi are the originators of magic, it is said that only decedents of the Magi can perform magic, as a matter of fact, the word magic means, like the Magi. I have heard some incredible

stories about them, Michael and I met when I was thirteen, he took a liking to me, said I was special. On my twentieth birthday, he showed me one of my alternate timelines, a timeline where I was so reckless, I let Voldemort take over the world, you were never born, it was horrible.” Dumbledore paused. “But because of it, I learned, I became different, better I dare say, than I was, and look where we are today. Voldemort is loosing power, Harry has become stronger than any wizard, ever, and I’ll die a happy man.” Dumbledore finally finished.

“Do you know how old Michael is?” Hermione asked.

“I don’t know, he has told me stories of the Great Pyramid being built, so I assume he’s quite old.” Dumbledore said.

They all sat pondering what Dumbledore had just said.

“What about the polyjuice potion, Harry?” Dumbledore pressed.

“Oh yeah, in one of those timelines, I read a book on altering your appearance, I can take on the appearance of anybody I want, no polyjuice needed.” Harry said.

“Well then, I think we have a plan, all we need is Narcisa’s agreement, and we can bring Minerva and Severus home.” Dumbledore said smiling.

“Yeah,” they all agreed.

Chapter 15

Dumbledore stood on the Hogsmeade Station platform, awaiting the arrival of the Hogwarts Express. He knew perfectly well that there were only two passengers, but at that moment, they were two very important passengers.

Draco and Narcisa Malfoy were expected to arrive. Dumbledore had hoped to convince Narcisa to trap her husband Lucius so that two Hogwarts teachers could be saved.

The train arrived fifteen minutes early. Dumbledore heard Narcisa barking out orders to her house elf. He shook his head.

When they were finally in sight, he approached cheerfully.

“Narcisa, good to see you again,” Dumbledore said pleasantly.

“And you Albus.” Mrs. Malfoy said, shaking his hand.

“Welcome back Draco.” Dumbledore addressed her son.

“Thanks.” Draco answered with obvious disgust.

Dumbledore lead Narcisa to his office, Draco was instructed to proceed to the Slytherin common room.

Dumbledore spent two hours explaining their plan to Narcisa, she begrudgingly agreed. She wasn't thrilled with her son being impersonated by Harry Potter, but she had little choice.

Narcisa had confided in Dumbledore that she still received owls from her husband on a regular basis about seeing his son. Dumbledore told her to inform Lucius that she wanted peace between them, and would only allow Draco near him, if he guaranteed his safety.

The plan was set for the Saturday after the school term began. Lucius instructed Narcisa to have Draco in Hogsmeade precisely at noon on that day, under the guise of running an errand for her, she agreed.

The three-day week went by slowly for Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny, none of the others were aware of the plan, not even Draco. Dumbledore knew there could be a leak, and none of them were taking any chances.

When Saturday finally rolled around, Harry left Cindy with the two house elves, and apparated to Hogwarts, where he would have one final meeting with Dumbledore about the plan.

“Harry.” Dumbledore began. “I don’t want you taking any chances, if there is even the slightest threat, I want you apparating out, and do you understand?” Dumbledore asked him concernedly.

“Don’t worry Albus, I don’t think I’ll have to, but if you insist, I promise.” Harry said.

“The plan is for you to fly to Hogsmeade on Draco’s broom, and enter the Three Broomsticks for a fictitious order. I expect Lucius to approach you there. Make sure he’s alone, remember, he’s already ordered the Death Eaters to kill Draco.” Dumbledore said.

“I understand.” Harry said simply.

Harry left Dumbledore’s office. He picked up Malfoy’s broom from Narcisa, altered his appearance, and set off for Hogsmeade.

Harry arrived at the Three Broomsticks five minutes early; he spoke to Rosemerta, grabbed a butterbeer, and sat down as if waiting for an order to be filled.

He kept trying to avoid looking around and giving someone the impression he knew more than he did.

Harry got a tickling feeling in the back of his neck, when he turned around, a hooded wizard was approaching.

The wizard sat opposite Harry. Harry began to complain as if he was Draco, but the hooded wizard hushed him.

"There is a wand pointed at you under the table, take this book, it's a port key, your father wants to see you." The hooded wizard said quickly.

Harry purposely got a worried look on his face, but did as he was instructed.

The moment he touched the book, he got that all too familiar hook feeling behind his navel, and was instantly transported.

Harry appeared in what looked like the hold room of a boat. As soon as he was acclimated to his surroundings, he realized the ground was moving beneath his feet; he was on a boat.

"Maybe that's why they're unplottable?" Harry thought to himself.

"Draco, how nice to see you again," Lucius said with a hiss.

"Father," Harry matched Lucius' hiss.

"I'm very disappointed in you, I always thought you'd make a great Death Eater, I guess I was wrong." Lucius said.

"And I father, always thought you'd make a great father, I guess we were both wrong." Harry taunted.

"How dare you speak to me like that?" Lucius spat.

"What are you going to do, kill me; you're going to do that anyway." Harry continued his taunt.

"No, I'm not going to kill you, yet. I'm just going to cause you pain, Crucio!" Lucius spat. Harry just stood there unmoving.

Lucius' eyes grew huge; he couldn't believe the curse was having no effect.

"Come on father, that one hasn't bothered me in years." Harry said in his Draco drawl.

Lucius stopped. I guess I'll just have to kill you outright." Lucius said calmly, raising his wand again.

Lucius began to choke, he didn't know why, he just couldn't breathe. He dropped his wand, and fell to his knees. Harry calmly walked over to him, took the wand from the floor, and stunned him with his own wand.

Harry locked him in the same storage room, and began searching the boat. As it turned out, it wasn't a boat at all, but a ship and a large one judging by how many cabins there were.

Harry continued to search for the Professors, he knew they would be safely guarded, but just didn't know where. As he kept searching, it began to dawn on him; there was no one else there, not even Death Eaters.

He began to get frantic, and then something else dawned on him, the message spell. He closed his eyes, thought, and out flew a silvery phoenix, then again he concentrated, and out flew a second silvery phoenix.

He waited. Then he heard it, tapping. He began running towards the tapping sound, he knew it had to be them, the thought he had sent was of them tapping. When he finally arrived, he waived Lucius wand at it, muttered a spell, and the door vanished.

Inside the room, Harry saw both McGonagall and Snape tied to the wall. McGonagall was unconscious, but Snape was still banging. When Snape looked up, his face fell. "Malfoy, came to gloat?" Snape spat at him. Evidently he thought Draco was in on it.

"Actually, I'm here to rescue you." Harry answered in Draco's voice.

"You, are you here alone?" Snape asked stunned.

"Yeah why, it's even my plan." Harry said, enjoying torturing his old professor.

"Well, don't just stand there, get these off of me." Snape barked.

Harry waved Lucius' wand, and the manacles released both Snape and McGonagall. Harry waved the wand over a piece of angle iron, which was on the floor.

“Here, a port key, it will take you straight to Madam Pomfrey.” Harry said handing it to Snape.

“Thank you Potter,” Snape said smiling.

“I must admit Snape; I have new found respect for you.” Harry said, changing himself back.

The moment Snape touched the piece of iron; he and McGonagall were gone.

Harry walked up to the bridge of the ship. He was amazed to find no one controlling it. The vessel was obviously an abandoned cruise ship.

“Why would anybody abandon this ship?” Harry thought to himself. “Unless, they didn’t go freely,” he surmised.

Harry decided to check the entire ship, bow to stern. He came up empty. The only thing he found was the crew and passenger manifest from the week before. It had listed over 900 crew, and 2100 passengers.

“Do they have them captive, or did they simply hijack the ship?” Harry wondered. “Only one person knows for sure, Malfoy.” Harry thought.

Harry went back down to where he had left Lucius, when he opened the door, it was empty.

“Damn, he got away.” He said out loud.

After another hour of looking around, Harry decided to go back to Hogwarts.

When he arrived, he found Snape in the war room.

“Ah, Mr. Potter.” Snape greeted him.

“Professor Snape.” Harry answered back

“It took you long enough.” He said with a bark.

"I was busy." Harry responded in kind.

The entire Department was watching the exchange with interest.

"Next time, get your priorities in order; Professor McGonagall could have been hurt." Snape snapped.

"My priorities are in order, and I was still busy." Harry retorted.

"A word outside Potter," Snape demanded.

"Whatever you want Snape," Harry answered in kind.

When the two were outside the room, and out of earshot of the rest of the Department, Snape turned to Harry.

"Thanks, for the rescue and for the training. Both came in use." Snape said calmly.

"I'm just sorry we couldn't come up with a plan sooner. How's Minerva?" Harry asked, using McGonagall's first name.

"She'll be in Pomfrey's care for at least two days." Snape said evenly.

"Shall we?" Harry mentioned back to the war room.

"Indeed." Snape agreed.

They reentered the room. Everyone was looking at the two for signs of a struggle, but none was found. Harry took his seat at the opposite end of the table, Snape sat halfway down on Harry's right.

"Let me have your attention please." Harry waited for the room to quiet. "Professors Snape and McGonagall we held on a seemingly abandoned cruise ship. This, in and of itself, doesn't mean anything, but, where did the 3000 muggles go? Does Voldemort have them? Are they dead? We need to find them, and quickly." Harry pulled out the crew and passenger manifests. "These are the names. Ginny, get these to your sisters, they can use the computers in the café to see if they've been reported missing." Ginny took the papers, and left the room immediately. "Neville, go call the elves to the training room, tell

them to gather any information related to missing muggles.” Neville saluted, and left. “The rest of you, train, spend as much time as your studies allow on training. They’re coming, they’re coming here.” They all stood. “Ron, Hermione, a moment please,” they sat closer to Harry. “Guys, I need you to make sure they can do the shield charm around the school, and with as few as possible, we need an offense as well.” Harry told them.

“We still need at least 45 to maintain a strong shield.” Ron said.

“We have to do better; no one in the school can get hurt.” Harry said, sounding worried.

“We’ll do our best.” Ron said standing.

“Oh, one last thing, put the Percy plan in motion, have Arthur schedule a few public appearances over the next month, make sure Percy’s seen arguing with him, but nothing big yet, little family squabbles, understand?” Harry asked.

“Don’t worry Harry; it’ll be taken care of.” Ron said turning to go.

It was only Harry and Snape.

“You’re different, you know.” Snape said.

“More than you know.” Harry said resting his head on his hand.

“You said something about an offensive spell after we mastered blocking the cruciatus curse. What is it?” Snape asked.

“It’s called the Totilla Desisa spell, if instead of blocking all the pain, you let in as much as you can, then say the spell, it could destroy just about anything, and anybody.” Harry answered, not even looking up.

“Totilla Desisa? I’ll remember that. Thanks.” Snape paused. “Harry.” He said.

Harry snapped up to look at him. “Anytime, Severus,” Harry answered.

“No, I don’t think I’ll get used to that, Potter.” Snape said smiling.

"Me neither, Snape," Harry joked back.

Snape lightly slapped Harry's arm, and left the room.

"Malfoy's coming," said an all too familiar voice in Harry's head.

"I know." Harry said aloud.

"You know more than you should." An ancient looking man, who just materialized, said.

"You have no idea; Godric." Harry explained.

"This shouldn't be, you should not have known me in your sleep, you shouldn't have known me now." Gryffindor continued.

"There is much I know, that I shouldn't. More than any teenager should ever know." Harry retorted.

"In my day, you would have been an adult at 13." Godric said, sitting across from Harry.

"In your day, I would have already been dead." Harry answered, raising his head up to his forefather.

"One day we'll talk, and maybe I'll even give you a gift." Godric said, raising from his chair.

"Yes, your treasure will certainly com in useful, but at the moment I'm only interested in Voldemort." Harry said knowingly.

The spirit of Godric Gryffindor laughed. "Yes, you surely do know more than you should." He said as he vanished.

A week later, Harry and the entire Department of Dark Magic Enforcement, DME's as the Prophet was now calling them, were sitting around discussing the week's events.

"This is what we've got so far, the muggle news is reporting that a cruise ship went down with 3000 souls aboard, we know that's not true, so, that means there are either 3000 muggles to find, or 3000 bodies." Harry said without emotion.

“What about my father?” Draco asked, not trying to hide his concern.

“He’s coming. I expect before the month of May is done, he will come for you. He thinks you did those things, he probably wants to recruit you again.” Harry said, showing concern for his once mortal enemy.

“Well, at least he’s not trying to kill me.” Draco tried to joke.

“No, but when he finds out you can’t do those things, then you will have outlived your usefulness.” Harry explained the bitter truth.

“Thanks Harry, good way to lift my spirits.” Draco said sarcastically.

“Whatever mission Snape and McGonagall were on when they were caught, is still unknown, we can only assume they were sold out. This means there’s a traitor in the Order.” Harry couldn’t believe he was saying this.

“What? A traitor, I can’t believe that.” Ron said.

“It is hard, but you have to look at the facts, Snape, even though most of you hate him, is very intelligent, more than that, he cautious, if he got caught, someone had to have betrayed him, and Minerva, well, we all know what she can do.” Harry justified.

They all started murmuring.

“Well at least we know it’s none of us.” Hermione said. Making all but Harry look at her. “We didn’t know about it.” She clarified.

They all started agreeing.

Harry sat there quietly while the entire DME went on arguing. Harry kept trying to think of a solution; what could he do to end this?

“Kill Voldemort,” said a voice in his head.

“No, it’s too early, he’s still too afraid to show himself; he needs to be really cocky if he is going to show himself to me.” He said in his head.

“Take out his army.” The voice spoke again.

“How,” he asked the voice in his head.

“Malfoy will only attack Hogwarts with an army.” The voice answered.

“That’s it, entice Malfoy to attack.” He thought.

“Ron, take over, I’m going to see Dumbledore.” Harry announced, as he stood.

Harry apparated to Dumbledore’s office, and went in.

“Albus, I have an idea.” He said, sitting down with the Headmaster.

Harry explained his plan; he would let it be known that he’s going to Romania because intelligence places Voldemort there. In the same article, Harry’s engagement to Ginny would be announced, enticing Malfoy to attack sooner than later.

It took quite a bit of convincing, but Dumbledore finally agreed. They both apparated to Arthur’s office, utilizing Harry’s abilities, Arthur heard what they had to say and agreed. He didn’t want to put Ginny in harm’s way, but understood neither Harry nor Albus would allow anything to happen to her.

They all agreed not to inform anyone of the plan, only the three of them would know. Arthur kept a team of Aurors and Dark Aurors on call in case Malfoy took the bait.

That Monday the article was released.

Potter to wed Weasley

This reporter has learned that the boy who lived; Harry Potter, is now engaged to be married to the youngest daughter of Minister Arthur Weasley. Ginny Weasley, a sixteen-year-old student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, has agreed to marry the Commander and Chief of the newly formed Department of Dark Magic Enforcement. She, made legal by the Minister’s decree, can now marry Potter whenever she wishes. This reporter feels the Minister’s plan to allow Potter to fight He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, has now backfired, the Minister was unavailable for comment. In a

related story, Potter to travel to Romania in search of the Dark Lord, good luck Harry.

Hermione, who was at the Gryffindor table in the Great Hall, read the article first, and passed it around the table, Ginny, who would typically blush at this point, was smiling and laughing, enjoying all the attention. Most of the student body was unaware of their engagement, and it came as quite a shock.

"When's Harry coming back?" Ginny asked Ron.

"I didn't even know he was gone." Ron answered.

"He didn't have time." Dumbledore's voice was heard behind them.

"Professor, do we know when he'll be back?" Ginny asked.

"I'm not entirely sure, Miss Weasley, but I would assume it won't take more than a couple of weeks." Dumbledore said smiling.

"Is he going alone?" Ginny asked worried.

"He's not alone, he's never alone." Dumbledore said cryptically. "If you'll excuse me," Dumbledore added, leaving the Great Hall.

"Don't you find it strange that Harry left, and didn't say anything?" Hermione asked Ginny.

"It's just Harry." Ginny answered, not entirely sure she believed it herself.

The end of April and beginning of May found the DME practicing a wide variety of spells. Between Ron, Hermione and Neville, pushing the class to be better, there was no rest for any of them. Harry had still not sent word, or apparated by. Ginny was starting to get worried, but Dumbledore kept assuring her he was fine.

On the 13th of May, during the evening meal, Ron, sitting at the head of the DME table, watched as a silvery dove flew through the wall into his chest. His eyes grew larger than Hermione had ever seen.

“What is it?” She asked nervously.

“Neville, order the elves to the front of the school.” Ron said calmly.

“Everyone else, follow me.” Ron said standing.

“What is it?” Hermione asked again.

“Malfoy,” Ron said calmly.

Outside, Dumbledore was staring down Lucius Malfoy and fifty Death Eaters.

“Draco is under the school’s protection, you cannot have him.”
Dumbledore called out to Lucius.

“He is my son, if you don’t bring him to me, I’ll be forced to get him myself!” Lucius yelled as loud as he could.

“Then you will have to get through me.” Dumbledore said defiantly.

“One old man, I was expecting something harder, but, without Potter, I guess you’re all the school has.” Lucius said.

At that moment, Ron and the DME walked out of the castle. Without even a word of instruction, they encircled the school, and waited. Ron held his wand to his mouth.

“Sonorous.” He said. “Shield,” he added, as his voice was amplified by the spell.

Immediately a gold shield consumed the entire school, the DME’s, and Dumbledore himself.

“Attack,” Lucius yelled.

The fifty Death Eaters began a barrage of spells aimed at the school, the DME’s and Dumbledore, but none could penetrate the shield. The spells stopped.

“Well, it looks like we’re at an impasse, but I am a very patient man, I’ll wait all night. And when your children tire, we’ll just kill them all.”
Lucius spat.

The doors of Hogwarts opened, everybody watched as a young girl of 5 or 6, casually walked out of the school, and straight over to Ginny.

“Cindy! What are you doing?” She asked, releasing her part of the shield charm, and dropping to one knee.

Cindy smiled at Ginny. “Daddy’s coming.” She said pointing behind the Death Eaters.

All present; good and evil, turned at once. Standing at the edge of the forest was a lone wizard in black silken robes with gold stitching all around.

“Potter, how nice of you to join us” Malfoy said sarcastically.

Harry said nothing; instead he began to walk slowly towards Lucius and the Death Eaters. They all kept waiting for something to happen, and they weren’t disappointed.

Harry began to raise both hands, as he did a circular wall of fire rose from the ground and encaged them all. The wall rose twenty meters and the cage it created was sixty meters in diameter. Harry, Lucius and the Death Eaters had been closed off from the rest.

Lucius began a slow walk towards Harry as Harry walked to him. As Lucius got closer, he noticed Harry’s eyes were not the green that had been associated with him since birth, but yellow, a pale unnatural yellow. The closer Lucius got, the more nervous he became, and Harry’s pupils were vertical, like some wild animal in a forest.

“Well Potter, it looks like it’s just you and us.” Lucius said nervously.

“No need to be scared Lucius; I’m not going to kill you.” Harry said growled, causing Lucius to falter.

“Ha! You kill me?” Lucius said, still not able to hide his nerves.

Harry stuck out his empty right hand, and Lucius’ wand flew to Harry. Lucius stood rooted; he couldn’t believe that just happened.

“What kind of sorcery is this?” Lucius asked, now unable to hide his fear.

Harry put a finger to his lips. “Shh.” Harry said, binding and gagging Lucius without a word. Lucius fell.

The other Death Eaters, who were frantically searching for a way out of the ring of fire, were screaming for help. Harry just walked over to them slowly, as he had done with Lucius.

“I recommend you place your wands on the floor, and prepare to spend the rest of your lives in Azkaban.” Harry said, still growling like a lion, or more exactly; like a Gryffindor.

“I’d rather die,” yelled a hooded Death Eater.

Harry raised his right hand, and a green ray of light shot into the man’s chest. The hooded wizard fell, dead. “As you wish.” Harry growled.

The moment the others saw this, they all immediately placed their wands on the floor, and raised their hands in surrender.

Harry waved his left hand, summoning the wands to his side, and then waved his right hand, and all the Death Eaters were bound and gagged.

Draco was screaming as Neville, showing superior strength, held him down. “He’s mine! I have the right!” Draco yelled.

“Calm down, Harry will take care of this.” Hermione was telling him.

“It’s my fight!” Draco yelled at her.

Cindy was watching Draco and Hermione. She freed herself from Ginny’s arms, and walked purposefully to him.

Draco stopped struggling when he saw her, he had never seen anything like her. She raised her hand for him to take.

"Its ok Draco, come with me." She said in her soft voice. Draco stared dumbfounded, but couldn't resist, and took her hand.

They walked directly towards the fire, and stopped right in front.

"It won't burn you Draco, daddy wants you in there." She said smiling.

"But it's fire." Draco said stubbornly.

"It won't hurt you." Cindy said placing her hand into the fire and smiling up at Draco.

Draco stared open mouthed. He didn't know what to think, could he walk through it without getting burned, he wondered. Before he lost his nerve, he placed his hand into the fire. It was like warm bathwater, but it did not burn, it almost felt; relaxing.

"Thank you." Draco said smiling at the little girl next to him. He turned, and walked through.

When Draco entered the ring, he saw Harry sitting on the floor, his father and 49 Death Eaters bound and gagged, and one dead.

"Been busy, Harry?" He asked with a sly grin.

"Not really." He answered back.

"Can you release my father, and give him back his wand?" Draco asked calmly.

"Certainly," Harry said waving his hand at Lucius.

"Hello father." Draco said dryly.

"Draco." His father replied.

Harry waved his hand again, and Lucius' wand flew to him.

"Looks like I'll be able to finish the job." Lucius said to his son.

"Oh, I doubt it father, I may have learned a thing or two." Draco answered back.

Suddenly spells were flying back and forth, Draco would hit his father with painful spells, and his father would return in kind. Harry just sat and watched in amusement.

When Lucius attempted the cruciatus curse on Draco, the son immediately raised a shield.

“Time to get serious then father,” Draco asked sarcastically.

Draco returned the unforgivable curse, but Lucius blocked it. It had become evident that both wizards were equally matched. When the battle turned to the killing curse, it became obvious that the first one to connect would win.

As Lucius made his way around the ring, he stopped just short of tripping over the dead Death Eater; Draco saw the opening. Draco shot a spell to his father’s left, causing him to move right, and trip over the corpse that lay at his feet. The moment he began to fall, Draco yelled something he never suspected he would ever yell at his father. “Avada Kedavra!” He screamed.

The green beam caught Lucius in the chest; he died instantly. Harry stood and walked over to Draco.

“No one will ever know what exactly happened here. Your story is he began to use the killing curse on me, but you were quicker.” Harry said emotionlessly.

“Understood,” Draco said nervously, Noticing Harry’s yellow eyes for the first time. Harry nodded, raised, and lowered both hands, causing the flames to vanish.

When the crowd could finally see what had happened, they all applauded. Draco raised both hands in victory, but Harry made no motion whatsoever.

“Go to them.” Harry instructed. Draco obeyed.

When Draco was next to Dumbledore, he heard the crowd gasp. When he turned around, a green flash hit Harry in the chest, he fell, dead.

A black hooded figure emerged from the forest, and lowered his hood. His red eyes gleamed in the dusk, it was Voldemort.

“What was it old man, neither can live while the other survives?” He said, mocking the prophecy.

Ginny stared at the scene, and then screamed. “NO!”

Voldemort smiled, and then disappeared into the forest. Not even Dumbledore could believe what had just happened.

Cindy calmly walked over to her father’s corpse, placed her hand on her fathers body; and vanished.

“Cindy!” Ginny screamed.

Cindy was gone; Harry was dead.

Chapter 16

That evening found Hermione and Ron sitting in the hospital wing next to Ginny. Ginny had been so traumatized by Harry's death and Cindy's disappearance, that she hadn't moved or said a word since.

Hermione and Ron were taking turns trying to coax her back to reality, but their pain was almost as bad as Ginny's.

"Please Ginny, say something." Hermione said using a voice hoarse from crying.

"I don't think she's going to make it." Ron said softly.

"Don't say that! She'll be fine!" Hermione barked at him. Ron wondered if Hermione meant Ginny, Cindy, or herself.

"Ginny!" Molly screeched as she entered the room. "Say something dear." She added.

Hermione stood to let Molly sit down next to her daughter. Molly looked in as bad a shape as Hermione and Ron.

"Mrs. Weasley." Madam Pomfrey called softly. "She's been like that ever since they brought her in, physically she's fine, there's nothing I can do." Pomfrey said, almost defensively.

"She'll be fine; she just needs a good night sleep." Molly assured herself. The others just looked at each other.

When Dumbledore arrived with Arthur, Ron gave his seat to his father so as to take the opportunity to talk to Dumbledore.

"What are we going to do without Harry?" Ron asked concernedly.

"I don't know Mr. Weasley, but our immediate concern is your sister." Dumbledore told him.

“Sir, she just watched the man she loved die, and the girl she called daughter disappear, she’s going to be traumatized.” Hermione said, joining in on the conversation.

“I understand that Miss Granger, but we can only focus on the here and now.” Dumbledore explained.

After an hour of useless conversation with Ginny, Molly waved her wand at her, and Ginny went right to sleep.

“She’ll be fine, just needs some sleep.” She told her husband.

“Of course Molly dear, you’re right.” Arthur assured her.

“You go talk to Albus; I’ll stay here with her.” Molly said.

“I’ll be back straight away.” Arthur said standing.

Arthur looked at Dumbledore, Hermione then Ron. “Albus, we need to talk, all of us.” He added, glancing at Ron and Hermione again.

“Of course Minister, my office then,” Albus said, motioning to the door.

They left the hospital wing, and proceeded to Dumbledore’s office. The former Headmasters and Headmistresses of Hogwarts were running around the various paintings whispering to each other. It seemed to Hermione, that even they appeared nervous.

“Albus,” Arthur started, sitting across from the Headmaster. “This does not look good, if Harry is really dead, then we have lost, no one but Harry can kill Voldemort, we’ve known this for sixteen years.” Arthur said nervously.

“It may be true Arthur that none of us can kill him, but that doesn’t mean that we cannot stop him. I’m sure with enough time; the Department you created will be able to put an end to his reign of terror.” Dumbledore said surely.

“Its true dad, Harry has taught us spells, charms and curses, no one has ever heard of, and some of the teachers here have learned how

to block the cruciatus curse, they can teach us. We will stop him.” Ron told his father.

“Now Ron, I don’t want you on some sort of vengeance kick, Harry’s dead, but we have to keep our heads.” Arthur said in a fatherly tone.

“I’m not on a vengeance kick, quite the contrary, I’m very calm, considering my best friend was killed right before my eyes, my goddaughter is now missing and my sister is lying in a semi-comatose state.” Ron said with a hint of anger in his voice.

“I agree Minister, we have been well trained, and we do command an entire army. I think if we act immediately, we can put him away for good.” Hermione said, not really sure she believed it.

“There you have it Arthur, the two senior officers of the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement have spoken, and we all have to take steps to ensure everyone’s safety.” Dumbledore said smiling.

“What do you need me to do?” Arthur said sadly.

“First, we must inform the wizarding community that Harry is dead, if the public finds out you’re keeping anything from them, you’ll be removed from office. Second, we must hold a funeral for Harry; we all have to mourn his loss. Third, we must resend envoys to the giants, Voldemort’s Death Eater numbers have dwindled, and he needs warriors. And finally, we have to release the Dark Aurors into the public, they need to see them patrolling, keeping the streets safe.” Dumbledore explained.

“Consider it done.” Arthur said simply, preparing to return to the hospital wing. “Ron, Hermione, you should get some rest, tomorrow will be a long day.” Arthur said, leaving the room.

Ron and Hermione watched as the Minister left Dumbledore’s office. The two students turned to the Headmaster with a look of complete desperation.

“Do you really think we can do this?” Hermione asked Dumbledore.

Dumbledore surveyed her for a moment. "Yes Miss Granger, I do." Dumbledore said honestly.

Ron and Hermione left for Gryffindor tower.

"Do you think we can do it?" Hermione asked Ron.

"Voldemort will pay." Ron said emotionlessly.

Ron entered the dorm, as he had done countless times before, but the moment he saw Harry's empty bed, he lost all control. He began crying into his pillow, Harry was dead, his best friend, his brother. Cindy was missing, where did she go, where did she take Harry's body? Ron fell asleep to the sounds of his own sobs.

Ron snapped his eyes open, the sun was blaring through the window, it was already afternoon. Ron dressed quickly, and ran down the stairs. Hermione was alone in the common room waiting for him to arrive.

"Hermione, we need to find Dobby and Winky." Ron said quickly.

"Already checked, they're gone." Hermione said sadly.

"Damn. What about Harry's house, does anyone know where it is?" He asked hopefully.

"No, I checked. He used some spell to confuse the floo network into diverting everyone to his house." Hermione said, still more sadly.

When Ron sat next to Hermione, he could see she hadn't slept that night. Her eyes were bloodshot, and her face worn. She had aged ten years in the last 24 hours.

"Ginny?" Ron asked quietly.

"No change." Hermione answered.

"Come here." Ron said, embracing her tightly. "I miss him too. I loved him like a brother, no, more than a brother, we were best mates." Ron said, openly crying again.

“He was my best friend too.” Hermione said, crying again.

“Is the story in the Prophet today?” Ron asked.

She handed him a torn out article.

The boy who lived, dead!

Harry Potter is dead! Yesterday, in a showdown that cost he-who-must-not-be-named fifty-one Death Eaters, Harry Potter was killed. Details are sketchy, but what we have been able to piece together is the following, Harry Potter killed two Death Eaters, and arrested the remaining 49, in a fierce battle in front of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The dark lord himself cast the spell killing Potter from the cowardly position of behind a large group of trees. The Minister was quoted as saying; “Harry was like a son to me, and was engaged to my daughter, I will mourn his loss more than anyone could ever understand, but, we cannot lose focus on the big picture, the dark lord is still out there. I have dispatched Dark Aurors to every major wizarding city, and named Harry’s General, my son Ron, as the new Commander and Chief of the Department for Dark Magic Enforcement. We will stop the dark lord, if it takes every man and woman on our side.” Harry Potter’s funeral will be held at Hogwarts today at eight p.m., the Minister has asked to limit visitors to only those Harry knew personally. Security is expected to be tight.

“Today,” Ron asked astounded.

“Dumbledore wants the mourning over so we can continue with our lives.” Hermione answered quietly.

“Do you know where they are holding it?” Ron asked distractedly.

Hermione nodded. “On the quidditch pitch,” she said.

Lunch in the war room was soundless. The entire Department could not even talk about the events from the day before. Several of the Dark Aurors had tears leaking from their eyes, but even they would not sob for fear of breaking the silence. Ron grew weary of it.

“Have you all gone mute?” He asked angrily. “Harry is dead; the least you could do would be to talk about him.” He said even angrier.

“It’s hard Ron.” Neville finally spoke up. “We all loved him.” He looked around, stopping at the Slytherins. “Well, must of us anyway. It’s hard to talk about.” Neville explained.

Draco stood. He raised his glass. “To Harry Potter, we may not have gotten along all these years, but no one ever stood up for me like he did. He saved my life, and gave me the chance to defend my honor. I salute you.” He said, taking a drink. The others followed suit.

It was like opening a floodgate; they all began talking a once. Ron smiled when he heard Cho mention how she actually loved him, but could never tell him. Even Hermione was smiling as she recounted their adventures to Draco. Ron joined in on the Harry talk.

They talked the entire afternoon, and into evening. They talked all through dinner. When someone finally noticed the time, it was seven thirty.

“Time to go,” Ron announced. “Neville, grab one of Harry’s old uniforms from his locker. Hermione, conjure up a glass coffin, two meters long, by 75 centimeters wide by 50 centimeters deep. I want to put Harry’s robe in it.” Ron commanded.

They did as they were instructed, Ron looked at his creation. “Neville, conjure two long handles on the sides of the box, and I’ll need two volunteers.” Ron said. Everyone volunteered immediately. Ron had already chosen himself, Neville, Hermione and Cho, and only needed the two he asked for. He ended up choosing Colin and Draco.

The six carrying the box lead the procession out of the war room, and through the castle, the rest followed closely behind. By the time the coffin reached the front door, the entire army, with all the house elves, minus Dobby and Winky, were following silently behind.

Ron led the procession to the quidditch pitch. Dumbledore smiled at them when he saw what they were carrying. They laid the box in the center of the pitch, and took their seats.

When the clock struck eight, Dumbledore stood.

“Good friends, welcome. We have gathered here tonight to bid a fond farewell to our greatest hero, Harry Potter. But death isn’t the end, just the next big adventure. Those of us, who knew Harry well, will miss him terribly. He was a warm and giving young man, who, out of the goodness of his heart, took in an orphan, and has been caring for her for quite some time. He would risk his life freely, to help another in despair. He was generous and loyal, and most importantly to me, he was my good friend. But you’re not here to listen to an old man rave about the famous Harry Potter, you’re here to hear from his good friends, let me introduce the first speaker tonight, Miss Hermione Granger.” Dumbledore said to the crowd, who applauded her arrival.

Hermione made her way slowly to the coffin and makeshift podium. Tears were flowing freely from her eyes, and she had a look of complete sadness on her face.

“I loved Harry. He was my best friend. No one had ever treated me well; until I met Harry. As Professor Dumbledore said, he was a loyal friend, generous to a fault, but most importantly; he would do anything to save another’s life. I remember in our second year, how Harry risked it all to save someone he barely knew, she was just a friend’s sister. But nothing could have stopped him from doing what was right. In our third year, he spared a man’s life, who turned out to be his godfather, an innocent man sent to prison, and Harry loved him like a brother. In our fourth year, Harry was forced to duel the creature that ultimately killed him, VOLDEMORT.” Hermione emphasized the name. The crowd gasped. “Enough! Say his name! Voldemort,” Hermione screamed at the crowd.

She took another moment to compose herself.

“Also in our fourth year, Harry risked his life to simply return the dead body of a fellow classmate that Voldemort had killed. Harry didn’t want the classmate’s family to be forced to bury an empty coffin, wondering what Voldemort could have done to the body. In our fifth year, Harry risked his life again, when he thought his godfather was in danger, unfortunately, his godfather died. This year, Harry has risked

his life over and over again, trying to rid our world of Voldemort and his Death Eaters. Now he's dead. He was so much more than the "Boy Who Lived" he was Harry Potter, my best friend." Hermione said, walking back to her seat.

Ron stood, and walked to the middle of the pitch.

"Harry was my brother. Our friendship was that close. But Hermione has said more eloquently what Harry was; I'm going to talk about what he has left behind. Harry's adopted daughter, is my goddaughter, she's now missing. She took Harry's body, and disappeared. My sister Ginny is lying in a bed in the hospital wing, too shocked to even move. Neither Hermione nor I have time to grieve, Voldemort is still alive, he must be dealt with. When he is finally dead, then we can grieve Harry. Harry deserves so much more than this meager gathering." Ron stopped abruptly and left the pitch.

It became obvious to those present that Ron felt the funeral was insufficient. His words, "meager gathering" rang through the ears of the Dark Aurors, they stood and followed him. Dumbledore just watched, no one could read his emotions.

When all the Dark Aurors left, Dumbledore stood and addressed the crowd.

"I'm sorry to say, Mr. Weasley is correct. This does seem meager, I ask you all to pay your last respects in private, and excuse me while I see to the arrangements." Dumbledore left the pitch.

Back in the war room, Ron was ranting about the funeral. The Dark Aurors seemed to agree, this was their leader, their teacher, and he deserved more. All quieted though, the moment Dumbledore entered. They all expected harsh words, but the words never came.

"I'm proud of you all. I really didn't think I could fool you, but I had to try. This funeral was a trap, I set it up with the Ministry and the Order, and I held it in the enclosed space of the Quidditch pitch to keep Voldemort in. But you, Ron, now it was too meager for Harry and it was. I hope you can all forgive me for using such an important occasion like Harry's funeral as a trap for Lord Voldemort." Dumbledore said pleadingly.

Ron stood, and walked over to Dumbledore. Ron did something no student had ever done to a Headmaster, he hugged him.

"There's no need for apologies Professor, I would have done the same." He said. "If I had thought of it," Ron added smiling.

"Professor, what are we going to do now?" Hermione asked.

"Live day by day. We cannot live in fear, or lie down and die, simply because someone tells us to. We're going to fight, and we're going to win. The term ends next month, and I am taking the summer to find Cindy Potter, I promise I will not rest until she's found." Dumbledore said, glaring into Hermione's eyes.

"Nor will I. She is my goddaughter; I will be at your side." Ron added, in a tone that assured them all he would not take no for an answer.

"Nor will I." Hermione agreed, standing next to Ron.

"Nor will I." Draco said standing. When everyone turned to look at him, he spoke again. "Harry gave me the chance to stand up to my father, Cindy showed me the way, and I will NOT let anything happen to that girl. I swear it." Draco added in no uncertain terms.

Dumbledore smiled. "Then it's settled, Mr. Weasley, Miss Granger, Mr. Malfoy and I, will set off at the end of term to find Cindy. The rest of you will be given orders from Mr. Weasley as to what you are to do, and where you are to go. Voldemort will be defeated, that I guarantee you." Dumbledore said turning, and leaving the war room.

The rest of the year passed in a blur. The fifth years took their O.W.L.'s, the seventh years took their N.E.W.T.'s and the rest took their end of year exams. Ginny remained in a semi-comatose state for the remainder of the school year. Every Dark Auror would take turns sitting with her twenty-four hours a day, to be there when she awoke, but she never did. Ron left specific instructions for the summer holiday for each Dark Auror, the graduating seventh years had it the worst, as Ron had them all patrolling populated areas such as Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade. He also assigned two Dark Aurors, one of which was Cho, to his father as protection from Voldemort.

During that same month, Ron orchestrated Percy's fall from grace. Halfway through the summer, Percy was to argue with his father for the last time, and storm off, during which time, Cho would chase him down to try and reason with him, and Percy would stun her. It had been planned down to the smallest detail. The time, the place, the argument, nothing was left to chance; even Dumbledore thought it was genius.

The time of planning was nearing the end; the time of doing was upon them, the leaving feast. The entire Great Hall was decorated in black, in memory of Harry Potter. The students almost looked scared to be going home for the summer. Hogwarts was safe, safe because it had Dumbledore.

No one seemed to speak during the meal. When Dumbledore finally stood to give his end of year address, the students did not need quieting.

"Another year over, this has been a year of great happiness, and a year of great sorrow. Harry may be gone, but his legacy will live forever." Dumbledore motioned to the Dark Aurors. "I know many of you are nervous about leaving the safety of Hogwarts, but I assure you, you are no safer here than in your own homes. For the graduating seventh years, go out and do what you planned, do not let Lord Voldemort dictate to you how to spend the rest of your lives. Remember, if you always do the right thing, you will never be sorry. Good bye." Dumbledore said, sitting.

The crowd stood to leave. Ron, Hermione and Draco all remained seated. Dumbledore waited until the rest had gone before approaching them.

"Have you all spoken with your families?" Dumbledore asked the three remaining students.

"Mum didn't like it, but dad convinced her." Ron said, handing Dumbledore a piece of parchment.

"My mum was proud." Draco said, also handing Dumbledore a piece of parchment.

Hermione just hung her head. She had no parchment for Dumbledore.

"My parents refused." Hermione said, not raising her head.

"Good." Ron began, getting an evil look from Hermione. "I'm sorry, but I need a leader for the Dark Aurors, Neville is an outstanding Dark Auror, but he doesn't have your cunning, I need you here. I don't know where we'll end up, but someone has to be made available if there are problems." Ron said, hugging Hermione.

"Mr. Weasley's right, the Dark Aurors need you. You are the highest ranking officer now; you need to be accessible to them." Dumbledore agreed.

Draco stared right into Hermione's eyes. She saw a look of real sympathy. "Don't worry Hermione, we'll find her." Draco said, doing something he had never done, hugging Hermione sympathetically.

"Mr. Weasley, Mr. Malfoy, we'll be leaving before sunrise, have your bags packed tonight. Miss Granger, try not to think about this too much, and don't blame your parents, they just want to keep you safe." Dumbledore said, leaving the Great Hall.

"Malfoy," Ron said, turning to Draco. "I'll see you in the morning." Ron declared.

"Not if I see you first, Weasley." Draco said jokingly, leaving the Great Hall.

"Are you two going to kill each other?" Hermione asked, only half joking.

"No." Ron said seriously. "I'll survive." He added jokingly.

The next morning, Hermione boarded the train with Neville, Crabbe and Goyle. It became apparent to Hermione, that Crabbe and Goyle attached themselves to Neville, since he became their teacher. Ginny was sent onward to St. Mungo's, the Weasley's felt that was the best environment for her, Hermione agreed.

When the four were sitting in a compartment together, Neville turned to Hermione.

"You do know Harry could have helped her." Neville said, obviously talking about Ginny.

"Like he helped your parents?" She asked.

"Yeah, he can enter your mind if he's touching you." Neville explained.

"He can do that? I wonder if he ever did that to me." Hermione said, finding herself feeling exposed.

"You would have known. Besides, he wasn't that type of person." Neville said seriously.

"You're right. I know he would never do that." Hermione said, more to herself than Neville.

"Has anyone told his aunt and uncle?" Neville asked, suddenly remembering the Dursleys.

"Yeah, Dumbledore wrote to them the night it happened." Hermione answered.

"They're muggles, right?" Goyle asked.

"Locked him in the cupboard under the stairs, right?" Crabbe added.

"Yes to both, they were evil to him. It's a wonder he turned out so well." Hermione answered.

Crabbe and Goyle looked at Neville.

"Go ahead, tell her." Neville prodded them.

"Hermione, we're sorry." Crabbe said.

"Yeah, we never wanted to be bad to you guys, it's just, it's just Draco would look after us, and since he didn't like you, well, you know." Goyle added.

"Its ok guys, I understand. Apology accepted." Hermione said smiling.

No one spoke for the rest of the ride home. Luna and several of the Dark Aurors entered the compartment and attempted to engage them in conversation, but neither Hermione nor Neville would say much, and Crabbe and Goyle were never known as conversationalists.

When the train pulled into platform 9¾, Hermione exited the train quickly; she did not want to have to see her parents in front of the other Dark Aurors.

Hermione stood before her parents; they were looking at her with sorrowful looks.

"We're sorry honey, but it would have been too dangerous." Mrs. Granger said.

"She is my goddaughter." Hermione said with tears in her eyes.

"Who," Mr. Granger asked.

"The little girl who went missing was Cindy; my goddaughter." Hermione clarified.

"It was your goddaughter who went missing?" Mrs. Granger asked.

"I don't want to talk about it." Hermione said indignantly, and walked away.

Neville ran up to his parents and hugged them both tightly.

"Oh baby, I couldn't believe it when I heard." Mrs. Longbottom exclaimed, hugging her only child.

"I know mum, but we'll continue to fight." Neville said smiling.

"You're too young to be thinking of such things." Mr. Longbottom said.

"I am of age. And besides, I'm a Colonel in the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement." Neville said proudly.

"A what," his mother asked.

"A Colonel, isn't that higher than either of you two got with the Aurors?" Neville asked precociously.

"You're a Dark Auror?" His father asked astounded.

"Not just a Dark Auror, a Colonel." Neville repeated.

"I'm so proud!" His grandmother's voice came from behind Neville.

"Grams," Neville exclaimed, hugging his grandmother.

"A Dark Auror, the best of the best. You'll have to show me when we get home." His grandmother said proudly.

Neville walked away, hand in hand with his grandmother, she had never been more proud of Neville in his life. He had accomplished more, by the age of sixteen, than any Longbottom ever had. Mr. and Mrs. Longbottom just stared at each other.

Cho ran up to her parents, as Neville had done to his. Her parents looked prouder than even Neville's grandmother.

"My little girl," Mr. Chang said, hugging his daughter. "So, have you decided what you're going to do?" He asked smiling.

"Actually, yes, I joined the Department of Dark Magic Enforcement." She said, drawing herself up to full height.

"That sounds dangerous." Mrs. Chang said.

"Do you know what you'll be doing?" Her father asked, sounding even more proud.

"Yes, I'm protecting the Minister of Magic himself." Cho said.

"I knew it, starting at the top." Her father said, hugging her tightly.

Hermione said nothing to her parents the entire ride home. They kept attempting to engage her in conversation, but she would not comply.

When they got home, the Grangers trapped Hermione in the kitchen, and decided to force her to talk.

"Sit down, young lady." Mr. Granger said angrily. Hermione sat.

"Now, what is all this about, this goddaughter of yours?" Mr. Granger asked.

"You know the story daddy, Harry adopted a child in the beginning of the year; Ron and I were named godparents. The ceremony was held over Easter holiday, remember?" Hermione explained with a bark.

"And Harry's dead?" Mrs. Granger asked.

"Yes. We all watched as Voldemort killed him. And when I say all, I mean Cindy too." Hermione said, still quite angry.

"That was her name, Cindy." Her mother added.

"That IS her name!" Hermione corrected angrily.

"I'm sorry dear, my mistake." Mrs. Granger corrected herself.

"But you can't expect us to allow you to run around on some dangerous mission to find her, do you?" Her father asked.

"And you expect me to sit around while my six year old goddaughter could be who knows where, in possibly grave danger, do you?" Hermione retorted.

"That's enough, go to your room." Her father commanded. Hermione obliged.

"Don't you think you were a little harsh on her?" Mrs. Granger asked her husband.

"She's sixteen." Mr. Granger answered.

"And a godmother, you wouldn't expect me to sit around if Hermione went missing, do you?" Mrs. Granger asked in a mocking tone.

"No, but she's sixteen." Mr. Granger reiterated.

"I know dear, but we could try to be understanding, she feels useless, and sending her to her room like a child is not the answer. Remember, in her world, she's of age, she probably wants to do everything possible to find Cindy." Mrs. Granger explained.

"Fine, I'll talk to her." Mr. Granger conceded.

Hermione was in her room crying when Mr. Granger entered.

"Pumpkin, I'm sorry. I really didn't mean to be harsh, but you must understand how we feel, we don't want to lose you anymore than you want to lose Cindy." Mr. Granger explained.

"I know daddy." Hermione said, hugging her father. "I'm just so scared." She added.

"It'll be fine. From what you said, your Headmaster is going, and from what I hear, there's nobody better." Her father said soothingly.

"I know." Hermione said simply, finally admitting to herself that with Dumbledore looking, Cindy would be found.

Hermione slept long and calmly that night. Tomorrow was another day.